THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

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DEACON & PETERSON, Publishers,
No. 319 Walnut St., Philadelphia.

ONE AWAY.

FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.
BY CLARA AUGUSTA.

The wild winds whistle down the hills' dark [illegible],
The leaden air is full of hail and snow—
And tossed and harassed by the reckless wind,
The drifts to frigid, white-capt mountains grow.

The cold is brutal—ice reigns everywhere—
The lowland streamlet groans in sullen pain—
The mighty river flowing to the sea,
Struggles in impotence to break its chain.

It is a night when thankful unto God
For home and love, we gather round the hearth,
When we would draw in those we care for most
To our embrace, *from* all the wide, *cold* earth.

I shudder, though the grate is crimson red,
And all around me is the ruddy light;
My thoughts go out to wander after *one*—
To wonder where he is this boisterous night!

Sleeps he beside the camp fire's dying glare,
Dreaming of home and friends so far away?
Or pacing on the lonesome picket guard,
With weary waiting for the break of day?

The tents gleam whitely through the torpid night,
The earthworks sharp defined rise up below—
And through the murky gloom that lies between,
He sees the distant watch fires of the foe.

The dark eye kindles—flushes hot his cheek—
May be the morrow's sun will shine on strife!
The smoky sky hang over men who meet
To yield up blood for blood, and life for life!

Oh, heaven! the winds shriek on like fiends at war!—
My heart shrinks cold and shud'ring in my breast;
The thought of him upon that deadly field,
Breaks ruthlessly through all my hours of rest!

I find no peace, or comfort;—Heaven be kind!
This mortal dread of Fate, so stern and grim,
Is terrible! my dreams are full of it!
My life is one long prayer to God for him!

Farmington, N. H.

CHRISTMAS.

Perhaps, of all pleasant parties at Christmas time, the children's party is the most agreeable. The young enter with so hearty a relish into the holiday sports, their cheerful laughter rings out merrily as they gather round the table, or join in innocent Christmas games, or stand full of admiration before the wondrous tree blossoming with Christmas gifts. Well, without being childish, we may all endeavor to have the joyous, innocent, trustful, hopeful feelings of childhood at this Christmas time.

THE CHEAP CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

To be Sold, with immediate possession, a Castle, on the sea-coast of Blankshire, with ample accommodation for a family of distinction. Noblemen or gentlemen treating for the same without the intervention of an agent, will meet with liberal terms. For particulars and cards to view, apply to Messrs. Nockemdon, Auctioneers and Estate Agents, London; or to Mr. Nathaniel Graves, Cinqueport, Blankshire.

The above is an advertisement which occupied a place in the *Mansion* columns of the *London Times*, last March, and had done so pretty often before, I have no doubt. You remember it, reader, I dare say, who have passed more than one autumn yachting off that coast, and as you read it, have wondered whether it referred to Eyrie Towers, that stands so majestically to the east of Cinqueport, above the foam and roar of the Atlantic. And you, reader, who peruse the Times (for cheapness' sake) in your Institute, you have read it too, and remembering that steam-boat excursion of which you formed a unit, in August last, and which was erroneously termed a pleasure-trip, you also call to mind Eyrie Towers, for the good-natured skipper touched you on the back—you were leaning over the side—as the vessel passed it, and exclaimed: "There, mate, would you not like to live in a house like that?" To which you replied, faintly: "I don't care where it is, captain, so long as it's on the blessed dry land."

You are both right my friends; Eyrie Towers is the very place alluded to by that advertisement, albeit when I had learned as much from Messrs. Nockemdon it afforded no information to *me*. I am not a sea-going man myself, never having personally explored what is very properly termed "the waste of waters"—for why should there be so much of it?—further than Herne Bay; nor have I, until quite lately, ever seen Eyrie Towers from seaward, although I have been its proprietor these six months. However, I am anticipating. When I first caught sight of this advertisement, I was sitting in the breakfast-room in my villa on Wimbledon Common; my eyes wandered from the newspaper to the plate glass window, through which was to be seen the well-ordered garden, with its trim borders, and painfully distinct paths, and the white gate, and that dusty high-road on the other side of it, along which I should presently be carried away into the teeming city. Then these things faded away from my retina, and in place of them arose a castle in the air, yet by the sea, surrounded with spacious but inartificial pleasure-grounds; a place far removed from the pursuit which had made a prisoner of me for two score of years, and whither the voice of the 'bus cad, with his "Bank, Bank, City Bank," had never penetrated, nor even the shrill whistle of the locomotive. Only the mighty roar of ocean should break in upon me, instead of the incessant hurdy-gurdy, and the snowy foam of the storm-stirred deep, instead of "blacks.' As for air, I daresay that it is fresh enough at Wimbledon—when the Volunteers don't make it half gunpowder—but fresh air, different from beef in this respect, is nothing when one compares it with salt. The smell of the sea, that mysterious unparalleled odor, without which a sea-side place is as disappointing to me as that bastard scentless flower, the dog-violet, was what I pined for. Instead of going to Margate or Ramsgate, as was my usual custom for many months in the year, I had come to Wimbledon; and for all the good that the change had at present effected, I might just as well have remained in Baker Street. Our butler, Muggles—who never forgot that his late master was a baronet—had declined to put up with Margate accommodation any more; we had come to our present house for the spring months on trial, and it was understood that the residence was giving him satisfaction; but still I made no doubt that a castle would meet with Muggles's more entire approbation, having been always accustomed, as he was wont to observe, to "high-life and its environs"—by which I believe he meant to signify its accessories.

We ourselves were not, strictly speaking, aristocrats (although, let me tell you, Stock-broking is far from a vulgar trade,) but we were visited by those who were. Though we did have a house in Baker Street, we were not merely "genteel" people; and besides, as I have already said, we only lived there half the year. There was no absolute incongruity in our residing in a castle—writing one's letters on note-paper with engravings of the stately pile in its N., S., E., and W. aspects, and having its title printed with elaborate diminutiveness on one's card—but it was unquestionably a great step (in the right direction,) and the contemplation of it caused a certain flutter of the spirits. If I had confided the idea to my wife, it would certainly have astonished her; and retrogression would have become exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, should Louisa Adelaide, our daughter, once recognize the practicability of such a design. "Yes," thought I, as I let the newspaper repose upon my knee, and gazed upon that unconscious young lady as she helped herself for the third time to apricot jam, "that girl would adorn any sphere. It is positively a waste of power to keep her in a villa. It is the duty of a father to provide what is most appropriate for his offspring—the very birds of the air perform what is right in that respect; her appetite, too, is failing; she wants sea-air; to reside in some elevated spot—say the tower in the east wing. Louisa Adelaide shall have her castle."

There was another reason, too, (which there is now no necessity for concealing,) connected with my daughter, which urged me to this step. It would place us at once at a social elevation to which young Theodosius Chane, the civil engineer, (whom I used to call Theodolite before I found myself obliged to keep him at a distance,) would scarcely venture to aspire. It was impertinent enough of him to emerge from lodgings in Camden Town to hang about Louisa Adelaide at a villa with a double coach-house; but to pay his addresses to her at a Castle, would, I thought, be a little too presumptuous even for him.

So, when I went into town, instead of driving straight to the city, I called at Messrs. Nockemdon to make inquiries. The clerk in the glass case, who had doubtless remarked the high stepping bays that brought me, was not in the least astonished at my coming after the Castle, and he introduced me at once to his principal, who was not astonished either. If I only liked the place half as well as Sir Runagan Flanigan and family, to whom he had last let it, I should never repent the purchase.

"Then it can be rented, can it," said I, "instead of bought?" Well—no—it could not be rented. He did not quite understand the circumstances of the case, but he supposed that the proprietor was now anxious to realize. Mr. Graves of Cinqueport, through which town I must needs pass to get to Eyrie Towers, was in possession of all the requisite information; but the Messrs. Nockemdon had merely instructions as to price. From the photographs just taken of the mansion in question, he might say with respect to this matter, that the place was dirt cheap. "Quite a show-place sir, I give you my honor."

Here the photographs were exhibited. Eyrie Towers, from every point of view, might have been the hereditary habitation of a line of Irish peers at the very least. There was not, however, the least tinge of decay or neglect about it, to remind one of Ireland. The garden, although not extensive, was well kept; and the shrubberies upon the land-side trimmed with tasteful care. Towards the sea, the castle was unprotected; a stone terrace, a little lawn, and a light iron fence alone intervened between it and the boundless ocean. Louisa Adelaide would certainly get air enough. There was not much ground about it anywhere; a field or two; an avenue; and what was locally termed "a bunney," a ravine or chine running down into the sea, comprehended all the territory. Beside the bunney (but having no connection with it) there was a "right of free warren" over a certain sandy tract, and upon this Mr. Nockemdon was vaguely eulogistic, although I don't believe he knew what it meant any more than I did. The external advantages of the property also included a sort of marine lordship; a third of all that came on shore in the way of wreck, between two headlands lying east and west of the Castle, was the property of its lord. This valuable privilege had been conceded to the founder of the ancient race, who had once inhabited Eyrie Towers, by King Stephen, on account of his having burned a village in the vicinity, inhabitants and all, because, upon being pricked with lance-heads, they had given provisions to some troops of the opposite faction. Only the queen, and one or two nobles in the United Kingdom, I was informed, had preserved this feudal right; and the possession of it, in point of social position, was incalculably valuable. Mr. Nockemdon only regretted to add, that, in consequence of the mistaken benevolence of the time, the power of life and death formerly enjoyed by the lord of Eyrie Towers over the people of Cinqueport was abrogated. Still, I should doubtless find the trades-people devoted to me.

But after all, the gem of the property was the Castle itself. This was none of your modern castellated erections, with pepper-box towers, and slits for loopholes, such as those, through which one drops half-crowns (or pennies, which sound as well) into missionary boxes; but a two-winged mansion, with court-yard and clock tower (the latter picturesquely ivied), a draw-bridge spanning what had formerly been a moat, but which was now a sunk garden, and even several bona-fide dungeons. The dining-room was adapted for the entertainment of thirty retainers (and some of them, if necessary, upon horseback), in addition to the family circle; while in the deep projecting oriels of the drawing-room, four or five flirtations might be carried on without any one happy pair interfering with the seclusion of another.

"I am afraid," said I sighing, "that this beautiful place is a little beyond my figure."

"Oh *dear*, no, sir," smiled Mr. Nockemdon, as though my banker's book were lying before him; "you will find the price the only insignificant thing about it. It is, indeed, in five figures, but they are five excessively small ones;" and he told me what they were.

"And does that include the fixtures," inquired?, as calmly as I could, for I was really astounded at the lowness of the price.

"The whole of them," returned the agent; "and whatever furniture you wish to retain may be bought at a valuation. I may tell you, however, that the less you have to do with a professional broker the cheaper you are likely to get it. The proprietor, Mr. Graves informs me, has a great objection to business men of all kinds. I trust that you are not yourself a lawyer, sir—that is well—for I doubt whether the proprietor would ever part with Eyrie Towers to a person of that profession."

I turned a little pale at this, for I had set my heart on the Castle, and began to doubt whether the hereditary possessor would soil his fingers with the purchase money of one who had passed his life in Bulling or Bearing.

"I sympathize deeply," said I, "with the peculiar feelings of the nobleman or gentleman in question—please let him know *that*—do, please. I shall be happy to run down to the Castle, and talk the matter over with him as man with man"

"My dear sir," exclaimed the house-agent, smiling compassionately, "it is quite impossible that the proprietor of Eyrie Towers could entertain in person any pecuniary proposition from a stranger, no matter how distinguished his social position. It could *not* be done. Mr. Graves has the fullest authority to treat; he will show you over the property, and into every room of the mansion, which is at present tenantless, except for a domestic or two, who keep the place in order, and exhibit it to strangers upon presentation of their address cards. On Mondays and Fridays, the apartments of the castle are at present shown to visitors; but of course it will lie in your power to take away that privilege, if you prefer seclusion."

This statement, carelessly uttered as it was, perhaps, was really a most seductive one. I am not an ostentatious person, but still—I put it to any gentleman of Throgmorton Street—was it not an elevating thought that people should come to look not only at one's drawbridge and ivied dock tower, but at one's sitting-rooms and sleeping apartments although, of course, in case of illness upon a Monday or Friday, this would be attended with some inconvenience. A request to take the photographs of Eyrie Towers home to my wife and family that day, was courteously acceded to, and I returned with a portfolio of them to Wimbledon, already in imagination a feudal chieftain.

One of the happiest evenings of my life was spent on that occasion. It was worth almost any money—even in five figures—to see the faces of my wife and daughter kindle with glad wonder, as I told them, after all their admiration of these pictures, that they represented a reality which might be their own. Even Muggles, who was somehow made a confidant of this coming grandeur, condescended to express his opinion that Eyrie Towers would "do." It was just such an "environ" of high life as he had been accustomed to from the first hour he had drawn a cork. Wimbledon looked small, although doubtless excellently adapted for the wants of the middle classes, as I started the next morning for Cinqueport.

CHAPTER II.

The one thing which rather mitigated my high spirits, as I lay back in the railway carriage with a "landed," though not, I trust, an overweening air, was the suspicion suggested by Louisa Adelaide, that the photographs of Eyrie Towers might have been taken from pictures (which are apt to flatter places as well as people), instead of from the noble pile itself. If so, it was not merely the device of the house agent to enhance the place, for all the stationers' shops in Cinqueport had specimens of the same views. An excursion to Eyrie Towers, "by kind permission of Nathaniel Graves, Esq.," was advertised upon the walls to take place in the ensuing month. Tickets to admit parties of not less than nine to view the apartments of Eyrie Towers on the days it was not open to the public, were to be procured of Nathaniel Graves, Esq., for half a crown!

I wonder what the exclusive proprietor thought of a proceeding of *that* nature. Of course, it was no business of mine at present; but I confess that, even to me, there was a smack of something particularly inconsistent with the feudal system in that reduction on taking a quantity. However, upon the whole, I was gratified. Eyrie Towers was, as Mr. Nockemdon had averred, without doubt, "quite a show-place;" and if it had been about to be pulled down, and its historical fragments disposed of for building purposes, the arrangements for giving the public a last look at it could not have been more energetic and complete.

I observed something of this kind at a print-shop, where I inquired my way to Mr. Graves's, and the young lady behind the counter, whom I addressed, replied laughingly, and with a shake of her curls: "Well, sir, we may not long—if all we hear be true—have the opportunity of visiting Eyre Towers at all."

She looked at me so roguishly, that I knew at once she suspected me of becoming its purchaser; and I set this down as being the result of my landed air. "That young woman shall come whenever she likes," thought I, "whether it's Monday or Friday, or any other day. I daresay she takes me for one of those haughty aristocrats who would keep the people out of everything; but I shall let her know I am nothing of the kind." I made a mental resolution to send her a card, with "Admit the bearer" on it, signed Tomphins (without any Christian name, in the old feudal fashion;) and I took down the address over the shop-door (H. Walker, Sharp Street) with that intention, and put it in my pocket-book.

Mr. Nathaniel Graves lived only a few doors off in the same street (No. 1,) but his house lay back within a courtyard, and was evidently the habitation of a man of means. What calling he professed, I had not inquired; but had I not been informed of the antipathy which the ancestral proprietor of Eyrie Towers entertained towards lawyers, I should have set down Mr. Nathaniel Graves for an attorney, pure and simple—if I may make use of so great a contradiction in terms. He was the nearest approach to a terrier that the Human is permitted to arrive at under the present physical laws; he smiled upon me exactly as that animal grins at "varmint," and his clothes were black and his complexion tan. His notion of conversation seemed to be a series of snaps, from which, however, I had no difficulty in gathering that I had come down to Cinqueport upon an almost hopeless errand. There was a gentleman already in the market who had seen the place but yesterday, and whose final offer (which included all the furniture as it stood) he was expecting hourly. Still there might be some hitch; and at all events, he, Mr. Graves, was instructed to sell the demesne to the first *bona-fide* bidder. He was inundated by letters about it by every post, although the advertisement was only just inserted, and should be heartily glad to get the matter off his hands. It was one that ought never to have been intrusted to him.

"Why so?" asked I.

"Because the price which my employer has chosen to put upon the place is simply preposterous," jerked out the little man; "because it is like setting one to sell so many sovereigns for pennies within a stipulated time for a stupid bet. 'Let me have done with it at once, and pocket the money, although it be not half price,' is what my employer says. It is not business at all—he says he hates business—but sheer folly. Did you happen to hear from Messrs. Nockemdon what is the amount at which my employer fixes the purchase-money of Eyrie Towers, with its pleasure-gardens and pasture-lands with its avenues of stately trees, with right of free warren and valuable feudal

vileges in connection with jetsam and flotsam?"

"Yes," said I; "and if the place comes up to the photographs, I think the Castle is cheap."

"Cheap!" snapped Mr. Nathaniel Graves, as though he would have snapped my nose off; "it's preposterous. Come and look at the place. If *I* had only the money to spare, myself, I would not have troubled you to come down here, you may be sure."

He lent me a saddle-horse, and accompanied me himself on a black pony to the spot in question. The air of sarcastic depreciation with which he treated the property which I had come down as a purchaser to view, was a thing quite unique in bargaining, and might, I should think, be advantageously adopted. As we rode across that desolate sandy tract over which the proprietor of Eyrie Towers had such mysterious rights, I observed that it did not look very valuable.

"No," snapped the agent viciously, "it's worth nothing, absolutely nothing. The rabbits are not innumerable, and do not sell for fourpence apiece in Cinqueport without their skins. The sand is valueless in the extensive glass-manufactories yonder. These long grasses are not of incalculable use for basket weaving. It is not even a pleasant galloping-ground, with the finest air in England, whether from sea or land; and Eyrie Towers is not a picturesque object when beheld from this rising ground. Oh no, not at all."

He drew rein as he finished the sentence, and pointed scoffingly to seaward with a bitter laugh. A finer natural landscape never met my eye than was afforded by that long reach of undulating sand-hills, tufted with heather, and margined with those forests of pine, blown backward by the aggregate force of a thousand sea-winds. Nor had the hand of man been backward in completing the picture, for before us, half girdled by woods of livelier green, stood up a stone-gray castle, ivied yet not decrepit, but proudly bidding defiance to the ocean that chafed and roared beneath its feet. Instead of swallows, the sea-gulls circled around its towers, and tossed and tumbled like the foam itself in the unclouded blue. Immediately beneath us lay a sailless sea, but on the horizon, even while we looked, speck after speck arose and grew, as if by magic, until the sun shone on a glittering squadron.

"How glorious!—how magnificent!" cried I enthusiastically. "What can those ships be, Mr. Graves? They seem to be very large ones."

"It is only the Channel fleet," replied the agent carelessly. "A person who lives in a place like Eyrie Towers cannot expect to see such sights as a London gentleman. There is nothing to excite yourself about, sir. Take care, or your horse will be in the quarry."

"Oh, there's a quarry, too, is there?" said I, for I felt quite ashamed of not seeing everything *couleur de rose* by this time. "You never mentioned that."

"Not I," returned the other with irritation, "it was not worth mentioning. If I was to tell you all that my employer is giving away for next to nothing, I should never have finished the catalogue. Yet some people consider a quarry of Portland stone to be rather valuable. The whole subject is painful to me. Come, let us see the castle, and have done with it."

With that, Mr. Nathaniel Graves set spurs to his black pony, and put it to a speed of which I should not have conceived it capable.

"You ride uncommonly fast, sir," expostulated I, "considering how excessively near this roadway is to the cliff."

"Why, yes," returned the agent, hastily, "it *is* rather near; the fact is, the soil grows more productive inland, and therefore, from motives of economy, I suppose, Sir Ranagan Flanagan has made the road, as it were, to skirt the Eyre property. It certainly did not use to run so near the sea as it does now."

"Sir Ranagan Flanagan!" exclaimed I; "why, I understood he was only a tenant! Mr. Nockemdon told me—"

"Mr. Nockemdon knows nothing about it," interrupted the agent. "Sir Ranagan is the proprietor, although he bought the domain—for a much larger sum than he now offers it for—only a few years back. He is an Irishman, or else I should say he was a madman, to wish to part with a place like this."

Certainly, with every stride of our horses the castle seemed to grow more imposing, as well as more habitable. It was evidently not only feudal, but convenient—which is quite another thing.

At this moment, a dreadful suspicion struck me, which set my heart beating, and sunk my spirits to zero.

"What is the matter?" inquired the agent, almost as agitated as myself, and unquestionably turning a little pale.

"Nothing," said I—"nothing." Then, as carelessly as I could: "Are there any old servants, retainers of the ancient family, still remaining at Eyrie Towers?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Graves; "there are both the housekeeper and the gardener. It is the latter who will open for us the lodge gates."

This was a venerable man with silver hair, and an expression in his countenance not only of sadness, but, as I imagined, of pity for myself, which corroborated my worst apprehensions.

"He can never get over the departure of his old masters," explained Mr. Graves in a low tone; "but he has a great sense of duty, and makes an excellent servant. Sir Ranagan gives him the highest character."

Mrs. Mortmain, the housekeeper, had a still more lugubrious appearance, and she also cast upon me a glance, which, without being exactly one of love, was certainly akin to pity.

"Well, madam, and how do *you* do?" observed the agent; "neither you nor Thomas seem in high feather. I want you to show this gentleman the Castle to its best advantage, and if he takes it, I am sure that you [illegible] not fear losing *your* situation."

"Sir,

"You

"Well, sir, you know we must all go in a very little time, for—" She blushed and stammered, but did not finish her sentence.

"Never you mind that, Mrs. Mortmain," replied the agent hastily; "let us enjoy ourselves while we can. She is a victim to religious despondency," added he in a whisper.

But I was not to be hoodwinked so. As I walked through the sombre, oak-panelled corridors, and visited library and drawing-room, hall and bower, there was one question always trembling on my lip, and only waiting the absence of Mr. Nathaniel Graves to be expressed in words. That astute gentleman, however, never left us alone for an instant, and I had to trust to the woman's evident natural honesty, at last, to answer me with the house-agent by her side.

"Now, look here," said I, as we stood in the ancient armory among the veritable garments of those who had perished in tourney and fight, and underneath the torn and blood-stained banners which had been borne before them perhaps to their last fields, "please to answer what I shall ask you, Mrs. Mortmain, with all truth. This Castle is cheap, and yet it seems very valuable; this Castle is comfortable, yet its last tenant tired of it in less than two years— Never you mind Mr. Graves, but look at *me*. Here, among these mouldering relics of the past, and within hearing, it may be, of the spirits of the bygone owners of this stately place, I charge you to answer this—*Is Eyrie Towers haunted?*"

"Lor' bless you, no, sir," ejaculated the housekeeper, with a simple heartiness of negation, about the genuineness of which there could be no doubt.

"Really, you do astonish me, Mr. Tompkins," observed the agent: "I should have taken you for a person wholly beyond the reach of any such ridiculous superstition."

There was an air of relief about him when I had once given utterance to this apprehension, which I still thought a little suspicious, but beyond that I saw nothing—and I saw everything with the exception of the beach, to which Mr. Graves humorously observed it was unnecessary to descend, unless after a storm, to secure my flotsam and jetsam—to make me pause in the resolution I had formed to anticipate the offer of the gentleman who was already in the market, and to give Sir Ranagan Flanagan his price.

In twenty-four hours, the land about the place had been surveyed and valued by a person in whom I could trust; and within a week, the title-deeds of Eyrie Towers were lodged at my banker's, and I found myself the proprietor of the Cheap Castle.

Why it was cheap, remains to be told.

CHAPTER III.

Among the minor domestic joys, there are few more pleasant than that of introducing those we love to scenes which have already afforded delight to our own eyes. How much more gratifying is this if we can add: "And all of this is mine and thine!" If ever territorial pride was excusable in a dabbler in scrip and share, it was when my wife and Louisa Adelaide, having exchanged their railway carriage at Cinqueport for a barouche, stood up on the seats thereof and clapped their hands as they first caught sight of the flag that floated over Eyrie Towers. There was no peculiar appropriateness in the banner itself, which was one discovered in the muniment-room, and may have been the Oriflamme of France, for all I know; but it certainly set off my marine residence to great advantage.

"May it fly above your heads, my dears, for many, many years," cried I, with enthusiasm.

"Lor, sir," observed the driver, who was sitting by me on the box-seat, "you can scarcely expect that, surely."

I thought his remark, at the time, to be one of the most insolent and uncalled-for interruptions I had ever heard in my life, but I took no notice of it, for fear of calling my wife's attention to the man's impertinence; he was evidently referring to her period of life, as not affording much probability of her residing "many, many years" anywhere; but still I felt a little discomfort, when I coupled his rudeness with the housekeeper's remark, upon my previous visit: "We must all go in a very little time." Was it possible that there was any legend or weird prophecy extant concerning the duration of existence of the proprietors of Eyrie Towers? If so, we must bear it, as one of the "environs," as Muggles termed it, of our ancestral position; and as for its fulfillment, I was prepared rather to put my trust in averages and the ordinary calculations of the insurance offices. By-the-by, thought I, I wonder whether Sir Ranagan Flanagan insured the place. This driver, who seems so disagreeably communicative, may be able to tell me.

"Do you happen to know whether Eyrie Towers is insured?" asked I.

"Insured? Why, what agen, sir?"

"Why, against fire, for instance."

"Oh yes, sir, it's insured agen *fire*. I remember seein' a little tin-plate *with* a Sun upon it stuck upon the side of the entrance tower, and they told me as how that was a sign it couldn't be burned. It's insured safe enough agen *fire*."

Why did he lay such an unnecessary emphasis upon the word *fire*? What other risk could there possibly be except that? Were the hailstones particularly large in this part of the country? If so, that danger could be easily guarded against at a very small rate per cent. Why, also, did I catch this man surreptitiously gazing at me, with that unmistakable look of pity I had already observed upon the faces of the two retainers? And why at other times did he snigger to himself, like a driv*er* laughing in his sleeve? Was *he* in possession of the secret of why the castle was so uncommonly cheap? I protest I was glad to see the fellow's back, as he drove under the Porcullis, and over the drawbridge, and along the avenue, and left us in our Baronial Home.

Louisa Adelaide was half wild with delight at all she saw, and explored every corner of the mansion like a sunbeam. She chose for her boudoir a chamber in the most seaward tower, and filled it with her knick-knacks, so as to make it livable-looking and cosy at once, after a manner quite peculiar to herself. Only over the mantle-piece she hung a portrait, which I would rather not have seen there, of a young man with a pair of compasses in one hand, and the map of the Universe (judging by its size) in the other, which, it is needless to say, represented Theodolite Chane employed in the practice of his profession.

"I *do* hope, my love," said I, "that that person will not intrude upon us at Eyrie Towers."

"*Intrude* upon us? No, dear papa, certainly not; but mamma has given him leave to come down on any Saturday to stay till Monday, which is all the holiday he can get, poor fellow, for he is getting so much to do."

"I am glad of it," said I, sardonically; "I wish he'd got a little more"—meaning too much to admit of any holiday. "But remember, Louisia Adelaide, as sure as the earth beneath our feet, when that Theodosius Chane puts his foot within this castle, I'll—"

At this moment, a noise as of thunder reverberated within the room, and finished my sentence for me with a vengeance.

Louisa Adelaide, terrified as she was, seized the opportunity to observe, in appalling tones, that it was evident that what I was about to say was displeasing, and contrary to Nature herself.

Without believing that anything supernatural had declared itself in favor of Mr. Chane, C.E., I was really a good deal staggered, for the shock was almost that of an earthquake. I mechanically looked out of the window, but all was placid as usual; the sea—which would have been affected, as at Lisbon, in case of an earthquake—was as smooth as a duck-pond; the terrace and little strip of lawn-garden that lay between us and the cliff top evinced no sign of fracture. I did not conclude my remarks concerning Theodosius, however, but left the room, murmuring something about the moving of heavy luggage over our heads, in order to account for the noise, whereas it had really come from beneath us, where, so far as I knew, there were no apartments whatever. My wife, who was busy in the housekeeper's room, asked me whether I had heard that clap of distant thunder, and I said I had. Whereupon Mrs. Mortmain, whom I was watching narrowly, stole a look at me, which convinced me she knew more than she chose to tell. It was just possible that she and the gardener might have a plan together to get us out of Eyrie Towers, in order that they might inhabit it themselves, and exact their perquisites from sight-seers and picnic-parties without a resident master; but if so, they little knew Thomas Tompkins. I was not the man to be frightened out of a Cheap Castle by stage-thunder.

Days and weeks went on, and nothing further took place to disturb us. I had explored every part of my property again and again, except the sea-beach, over which extended my rights to Flotsam and Jetsam—but the approach to which was by some very steep stone steps not attractive to a person of my physical formation—and whatever I had seen had satisfied me. The place was as cheap as Mr. Nathaniel Graves had asserted it to be, and I was sorry not to see him that I might tell him as much and apologize for the incredulity I had previously shown upon that subject. But I could never find Mr. Graves at home, though I drove over more than once to Cinqueport, mainly for the purpose of calling upon him. I was glad of an object, however insignificant, for a drive or a walk. Eyrie Towers was a charming residence, but it was certainly a little dull. The country families did not call upon us. This rather distressed Mrs. Tompkins; but Louisa Adelaide bore up against it wonderfully. I more than suspected that this philosophy arose from her devotion to her lover—as she could hardly with consistency have sighed for good society with her heart fixed on a civil engineer—but I was glad to see her so contented, at all events. For my own part, I confess I was rather hurt at our social isolation.

Upon a certain Saturday, as I was riding over the sand-hills, I met my next neighbor, the Honorable Tom Noodell, also on horseback, and he could scarcely help exchanging a few words with me. I was stiff enough, and of course he knew the reason of it. I made him indeed so uncomfortable that he began to apologize for himself and his friends.

"You see," said he, "*considering the circumstances*, we scarcely thought it *worth our while* to call."

"The deuce you didn't!" said I; "I am obliged to you for your candor, I'm sure."

"I mean no offence," added he; "but since you were only to be among us for such a *very short* time—"

"And how do you know that, pray, Mr. Noodell?" interrupted I. "You and your friends seem to take a great deal for granted. I am not aware that I am likely to remain a less time at Eyrie Towers than you are at Cinqueport Lodge."

The Honorable Tom Noodell regarded me with a momentary expression of pity, precisely similar to that which had already appeared on the faces of so many of humbler rank, and stammering out that he had been misinformed, and that Mrs. Noodell would take the earliest opportunity of repairing her omission by calling upon Mrs. Tompkins, he rode away at a canter, although not so fast but that I heard him sniggering as he went, like a country gentleman laughing in his sleeve. It was evident to my mind that the Honorable Thomas Noodell, although he was my intellectual inferior, knew something that I did not know.

This knowledge was not, however, destined to be hid from me long.

CHAPTER IV.

Upon my return from that very Saturday's ride which I have mentioned, I found the Cheap Castle in confusion from battlement to donjon-keep, or, less figuratively, from the drawing-room to the kitchen. Louisa Adelaide was in powerful hysterics. Her mother and the female domestics were of course more or less out of their minds with terror, and I was not a little alarmed myself; for my daughter is as sensible a girl as ever breathed, and does not laugh and cry in the same breath, or scream at the top of her voice, without a good reason. She had been found lying on the floor of the boudoir, grasping in her clenched fingers the portrait of Mr. Theodosius Chane.

"I had taken it down," said she, when she came to herself, "for the purpose of cleaning it, and I had it close to my face," (here she blushed, poor thing) "when a shock similar to the one you remember, papa, almost brought me to the ground, after which there was a peal of thunder, much worse than what we heard on that occasion."

"Is it not therefore plain, my dear," said I, smiling, "that Nature herself is inimical—"

"Oh pray, pray, papa, do not joke about it. I shall never sit in that room again with any comfort. I shall never be happy in Eyrie Towers any more." And Louisa Adelaide wrung her hands in a manner most distressing for a parent to behold.

At this moment there was the sound of wheels upon the drawbridge, and the gateway bell gave a tremendous peal. The women put their fingers into their ears at this quite unaccustomed portent, and screamed afresh. It was like some horrid scene out of the *Castle of Otranto* realized. But instead of a nodding plume and a helmet coming through the hall, it was Theodosius Chane in a one-horse fly, come to stay from the Saturday to the Monday. Louisa Adelaide and the rest of them revived immensely upon this, but, for my part, I was more disturbed by his appearance than by all that had occurred before. If an Englishman's house is his castle, not to be invaded by people he doesn't want, how much more should his castle be his castle! I went out rather hastily, and I believe slamming the door after me, and took a rapid turn or two upon the terrace, to dissipate what in a less good-natured man might be called ill-humor; presently I began to walk slower, and at last I took out my cigar-case. All my readers who are smokers will know that that was a good sign. A man in a passion can no more smoke a cigar than he can compose a sonnet. After a whiff or two I began to take some note of external objects; and, among others, of the gardener who was trimming a little flower-bed that intervened between the terrace and the sea.

"It is a pity that we have not a little more space for flower-beds in that direction," observed I.

"Ah, yes, sir," returned the old man, with an intense melancholy, "it is indeed. I can remember when there was ten or a dozen beds here, and an arbor, bless yer, in the late Lord Chiselden's time. Ah, he was a grand old gentleman, *he* was!"

What an extraordinary instance, thought I, of the evil effects of hereditary servitude. This gardener, and his father and grandfather before him, had all in turn been in the employment of the Chiselden family; and now, because the master was gone, the man was losing his senses.

"*Where* did you say there used to be ten or a dozen beds?" inquired I.

"*There*, sir," groaned the ancient retainer, pointing straight out to sea. "Where you see them 'ere breakers used to be the rose-garden."

"Dear me," said I, willing to humor the poor old man; "and where was the arbor?"

"The arbor was yonder, sir—near a hundred and twenty foot away, I should say.—The young ladies was a-taking tea in it when it caved in." The old man took from his pocket a handkerchief of the description known as "the blue bird's eye," and wiped his eyes one by one. "I takes an interest in this 'ere little plot, sir," added he, "because it's the last." Then he went on digging in silence.

"What an exceedingly odd old man you are," thought I. He was obviously mad, but yet so gentle, that he turned the worms away with the flat of his spade, and forebore to cut them through. "What an *exceedingly* odd old man!"

Just then a hand was laid on my shoulder, and I found myself face to face with young Chane. He had not the same thoughtful expression as he usually wore, but one that was grave, and even sorrowful, after another manner. Why, confound him, he was looking at me just as that driver, and the mad gardener, and the housekeeper, and the Honorable Tom Noodell had looked, as much as to say—"Poor old gentleman, I pity you; you have been and put your foot in it, heel and all."

"What is the matter, Mr. Chane?" said I, sharply. "Have you seen a ghost?"

"No, sir," returned he gravely; "but I have heard the subterranean noise that has disturbed your family, and I know what evil it bodes to Eyrie Towers."

"Well, what?" said I with a short laugh.

"Ruin!" replied he. "Your castle is built upon a rock indeed, but that rock is sandstone. The eastern tower, which Louisa Adelaide has chosen for her boudoir, will be in the sea in six months. Your land decreases with every tide. If you will but descend yonder steps you may see for yourself how the waves have honeycombed the cliff, and threaten to engulf it utterly."

In a shorter time than the best judges would have deemed possible, I descended hand over hand to the sea-shore. M. Leotard indeed might have done it quicker, but few other professional gymnasts, and no amateur. When a man has sunk five figures (even if they be but small ones) in the purchase of a property which somebody has told him is valueless, he makes haste to see. It would have been a good deal better for me if I had taken those steps before.

No wonder the castle was cheap. It was not worth eighteen months' purchase. The sea would have the whole of it in a couple of years. What a light was shed at once upon all the sayings which, until now, has so puzzled me!

Well might Miss Walker, of Sharp street, Cinqueport, have observed—"Well, sir, we may not long have the opportunity of visiting Eyrie Towers at all." I felt a little mitigation of my misfortune in that I had never sent her a ticket of admittance.

Well might the driver have remarked that I could "scarcely expect" that the castle flag would fly over Mrs. Tompkins's head "for many, many years!"

Well might that felonious Mr. Nathaniel Graves dissuade me from descending to the shore. His agitation when I asked whether the house was haunted had arisen from the fear of quite another question. No wonder the road ran so close to the cliff top; once only he had spoken truth when he said that it did not use to do so. There would be no road at all next year.

Well might the Hon. Tom Noodell and his friends think it "not worth while" to call upon us, since we were "only to be amongst them for such a very short time." He had concluded that I was aware of my danger, and had bought the Cheap Castle with my eyes open. When he found out that I was a dupe he sniggered; and who could have helped it?

Well might the old retainers cast upon me looks of pity at seeing me in the meshes of the man of law. Eyrie Towers had been bought and sold (and always marvellously cheap) ten times within the last twenty years. It was getting cheaper and cheaper every year. Everybody about Cinqueport knew the secret, and Mr. Nathaniel Graves had received his agent's percentage ten times over. When the place was first disposed of by its noble proprietor—on the occasion of the arbor caving in while the Hon. Misses Chiselden were taking tea in it—there had been a great space, when looked at from above, between the Cheap Castle and the sea. The subterranean thunder caused by the falling of the sand-cliff sounded, as yet, distant. The rose-garden was, I dare say, just where the old gardener had indicated it; I had thought him mad for doing so five minutes ago—but now who was the madman?

"If I was a rogue like the rest of them," muttered I aloud, "I should ride over to that scoundrel Graves, and tell him to advertise in the *Times* as usual. I dare say he would find another fool to take the place. How did *you* find out all about it, Theodolite?"

I called Chane by the old name, because I began to feel towards him after the old fashion. He was really a good fellow, although not a good match for my daughter; and even in the latter respect there was less disparity between our respective social conditions since Eyrie Towers *was* doomed; I was a poorer man by ten thousand pounds at least.

"Well, sir," returned the civil engineer, "I knew no more about the matter than yourself half an hour ago; but feeling the boudoir shake, and hearing a rumble with which my professional ear is well acquainted, I suspected what was wrong, and came down here at once, where I found my worst apprehensions verified."

"Well, it's a great loss, Theodolite," said I philosophically; "and I confess I shall be grieved to quit old Eyrie Towers."

"Then, if I were you, I would just stop where I was," returned Theodolite gravely.

"What! and 'cave in,' like the Honorable Misses Chiselden in the arbor? No; not I."

"My dear Mr. Tompkins," exclaimed the young man earnestly, "listen to me. A set of short-sighted as well as dishonorable men have been selling this place, as quick as they could sell, for I don't know how long, and each at a considerable pecuniary loss. If they had expended half the money in an honest and sagacious way, they might have lived here as long as they pleased. I know you will never act as they did as to the dishonesty; but as to the sagacity, will you be wise, and stay where you are? For five thousand pounds I will answer for building you such a breakwater as shall keep Eyrie Towers for your great-great-grandchildren; and if there be Portland stone within a reasonable distance—"

"There *is*," cried I, interrupting the young man hilariously; "there's a blessed quarry of Portland stone on my own land. Look here, Theodolite: if you will stop these noises, prop up the eastern tower, build the breakwater for five thousand pounds, and save me my Cheap Castle, I tell you what I'll give you—I'll give you Louisa Adelaide."

"Then, that's a bargain," quoth Mr. Theodosius Chane, C. E.; and we shook hands.

My wife and daughter never knew anything about the matter until there was nothing to know; they never suspected their danger till it was past: we told them that we were building a pier. When it was finished, and Eyrie Towers made secure, we had a wedding there, at which the Honorable Tom Noodell and half the country were present. As soon as they found out that our stay was not to be for a limited period, they had thought it worth while to call. The rescue of so well known a pile as Eyrie Towers from the devouring ocean, has enhanced my son-in-law's reputation, and helped to render him by no means so bad a match after all.

Mr. Nathaniel Graves alone speaks ill of the achievement, which he complains has deprived him of an annuity; and whenever I meet him he reminds me with snappish dissatisfaction of how he always told me I had bought the property for an old song.—Albeit, it is no thanks to him that Eyrie Towers is really a Cheap Castle after all.

☞ The happiest man is the benevolent one, for he owns stock in the happiness of all mankind.

☞ He who reels and staggers most in the journey of life, takes the straightest cut to ruin.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Henry Peterson, Editor.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1862.

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THE RECENT REPULSE.

There is no stronger proof of the possession of high and noble qualities by a nation, than a calm and firm bearing under the pressure of disaster and defeat. That the recent attack on the rebel position at Fredericksburg, was a very severe repulse, every one must admit; but, while admitting this, there is no reason for the indulgence of weak and unmanly complaints, nor are such complaints in accordance with the character of the great majority of the American people.

On three occasions, Gen. Burnside has attempted the bold game of carrying hostile intrenchments by a charge, and on two of these occasions—at Roanoke Island, and at Newbern—the result was all he could have hoped. On the *third* and last trial—that at Fredericksburg—he has disastrously failed. If he had succeeded in this last case also, nothing would have been said of the folly of the attempt—for the result to the enemy would probably have been overwhelming. Now, while we admit that a commander who cannot succeed in his undertakings, after a fair trial, is not the right man in the right place, we should not expect constant and unvarying success on the part of any general.

The readers of history know that the great Napoleon—master of strategy as he was—was prodigal of the lives of his soldiers on just such occasions. The storming of well-defended lines and intrenchments, was a feat frequently attempted by him—usually with heavy loss, generally with success, but also frequently with failure. A contemporary says, and though we have not verified the assertion by a reference to the books, we suppose it to be correct, that the entire movement of Burnside at Fredericksburg, was very similar to Napoleon's first crossing of the Danube. Napoleon's movement brought on the battle of Gross Aspern, in which he was so hardly used that he was obliged to recross, as *Burnside has done, to the Island* of Lobau. There, taking six weeks to give his troops rest, improve his bridges, and obtain reinforcements, he made ready for a new crossing, and the magnificent and decisive battle of Wagram, was the result.

In the present case there is nothing to cause serious despondency. We have lost in killed, wounded and missing, probably 10,000 men—and a sad *loss* it is, indeed; one to weep bitter tears over. The rebels have lost probably 5,000—as one of the Richmond papers admits a loss of 8,500. At this day, however, on the Rappahannock, since Sigel has come up, we probably outnumber the enemy not less than 50,000 men. And the path that cannot be blazed out in one direction, can in another—as Napoleon proved at Wagram. And one thing the present repulse almost conclusively shows, that give the army of the Potomac a fair field, and with the blessing of God, they will make short work of Gen. Lee's whole array of rebels.

As for General Burnside's military ability, we, for one, have a higher opinion of it than we had before the recent movements. While we have admired the man—his undoubted bravery, his patriotic earnestness, and deep devotion to the Union—we have never felt that confidence in his generalship which we should like to feel in one occupying so high and important a position.

But the crossing and the recrossing of the Rappahannock, in the face of so powerful a foe, and with scarcely the least loss, would seem to prove that we have either overrated Lee, or underrated Burnside. For, although it may be argued with great plausibility that it was not Lee's object to prevent a crossing, it cannot be argued that he would willingly have allowed an unimpeded recrossing.—When the news came that Burnside had crossed with so little loss, certain persons said, "Lee allows Burnside to walk into the trap." We replied:—"Lions sometimes break through traps." But Burnside, after his repulse, coolly walked out of the trap in the night time, in the front of a foe flushed with his transient victory. Therefore as we can hardly doubt Lee's generalship—after the proofs he has afforded of it—we must infer that Burnside probably possesses no small degree of the same kind of ability.

And if Burnside has generalship, now is the time to prove it. There lies Richmond, on the north bank of the James. Sixty miles off lies the Army of the Potomac. Between lies the rebel army, strong, but inferior in numbers. The problem is, not to evade, but to meet that rebel army, on something like a fair field, and either to crush it, or to drive it into the intrenchments of the rebel capital, where it may be worth while to waste some little time in regular approaches. Burnside cannot afford regularly to approach every hill that can be fortified between the Rappahannock and the James. If the rebel positions cannot be stormed, they must be turned. If the Union commander is not strong enough at present to attempt this with safety, he should be reinforced. But we judge that he has already ample strength for all the requirements of his position. Has he the

generalship? If he has, glorious will be the laurels that will encircle the head of that man, who is able to inscribe on the torn and stained banners of his legions, the one significant word, RICHMOND.

AN AMUSING CAPTURE.

The residence of Jacob Thompson, Buchanan's Secretary of the Interior, is, or rather was,—for Thompson is on the run—at Oxford, Mississippi. When our troops recently entered Oxford, it appears that Thompson's papers were overhauled, and his letter-book found, as also a number of letters addressed to him. Some of these letters are being published, and are very instructive reading. In one, copied into the letter-book, Thompson writes to a friend, under date of Nov. 20th, 1860:—

Difficulties accumulate upon us here. As long as I am here I shall shield and protect the South. Whenever it shall come to pass that I shall think that I can do no further good here, I shall return to my home. Buchanan is the truest friend to the South I have ever known from the North. He is a jewel and a man. But my duty now is to the South.

I want the co-operation of the Southern States. Geography makes separate and isolated action by Mississippi an absurdity. I have some influence in our Southern sister states. I wish to do all I can to secure their sympathy and co-operation. A Confederation of the Southern states will be strong enough to command the respect of the world, and the love and confidence of our people at home. South Carolina will go. I consider Georgia and Florida as certain; Alabama probable. Then Mississippi must go. But I want Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland will not stay behind long.

I fear Kentucky even more than I do Missouri. If we are not too hasty and violent, these states will all unite, because it will be their interest and their honor and feelings to do so. As soon as our mechanics, our merchants, our lawyers, and our editors look the matter in the face and calculate the consequence, they will see their interest so strong in this movement I fear they will be violent beyond control. The successful, unmolested installation of Lincoln is the beginning of the end of slavery.

The North is dependent on the South for its prosperity. The South is not dependent on the North for anything necessary to her material welfare.

Thompson, when he wrote the above, was a sworn officer of the United States government—and yet, as will be seen, he was plotting to destroy the government he was under oath to uphold, and thus acting the part of a perjured traitor in his high office.

In another letter, a Mr. N. S. Rencau, under date of Memphis, Oct. 25, 1859, writes a letter addressed jointly to "His Excellency James Buchanan and Hon. J. Thompson," in which he says:—

The numerical strength of the civil migrating party to Cuba is, by reports, now over twenty-five thousand. Of this number at least seven or eight thousand are ready to move for Cuba; and as your Excellency has told me you had *every confidence in me*; and you, Hon. Mr. Thompson, have assured me that the Federal officers at New Orleans and Mobile would be instructed to "let me and my emigrating friends pass," I now very respectfully request that you place in the hands of our mutual friends, Mr. C. Gallaway and C. M. Campbell, editors of the Memphis *Avalanche*, your most faithful supporters, the necessary passports for my benefit, and the sum of ten thousand dollars secret service funds for the use and benefit of those editors as above, in supporting your cause in acquiring Cuba by civil emigration, and with the use of that amount they will be enabled to earnestly and effectually co-operate with you for the accomplishment of that grand object. The political position of the *Avalanche*, as a true Democratic Administration paper, enables that paper to wield the necessary influence in successfully accomplishing the acquisition of Cuba before the termination of the present Administration, and the political aspect now loudly calls for it.

Whether the money (United States money, be it remembered,) was forwarded or not, is not stated—or the proof may perhaps be for the present withheld by the Administration.

There are other letters, one of which (dated Jan. 10th, 1861,) is an application to Mr. Thompson for money to get up "anti-coercion" handbills and meetings in the city of New York. This last is signed by a Mr. T. W. MacMahon, who is said to have been confidential secretary of Fernando Wood when that gentleman was mayor. MacMahon writes:

You will see by the reports in the *Herald* that every few days, our metropolis is flooded with Anti-Republican handbills. They are the source of the greatest anxiety and consternation to our enemies and a profound mystery to the general public. Groups of people gather around perusing them wherever they are found. Some attempt to tear them down, when a conflict generally ensues. The Republicans already imagine that they are sleeping upon a volcano. And all this is the work of two or three men, at their own expense, and without means to afford its continuance. As for the mercantile classes, we could not get a single shilling out of them. Hence, I resolved to address myself to you.

Altogether, the Thompson correspondence is very interesting and suggestive reading.

CHANGES IN THE CABINET.—It is reported that in consequence of the Republican Senators, in caucus, having adopted a resolution recommending to the President a change in the Cabinet, that Mr. Seward, Secretary of State, and his son, the Assistant Secretary, have handed in their resignations. It is also reported that Secretary Blair will follow suit, and even that General Halleck will be removed. Secretary Stanton, it is said, still retains the confidence of the President.

What reliance is to be placed in these reports a few days probably will determine. So far as Mr. Seward is concerned, it is generally known that that gentleman, for a year past, has not enjoyed the confidence of a large and influential portion of the Republican party—we consider him to be wanting in that energy and resoluteness which such momentous times as the present require.

PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.—Our thanks are due to the Hon. W. [illegible] for a copy of the Preliminary Report of the Census of 1860, containing a great deal of valuable information.

INJUNCTION APPLIED FOR.

We are informed that a charter having been obtained from the Legislature of this state to construct what is commonly called a "Passenger" railroad from the Navy Yard to Fairmount, with extensions, an attempt is now being made to use that charter for an entirely different purpose—the construction of a regular, locomotive road, designed to connect the railroad to New York with that to Baltimore.

It is the dictate alike of law and of Common Sense, that charters should be strictly interpreted. And if this case really be as is represented, we regard it as a flagrant attempt to violate the privileges granted by the Legislature—an attempt which we cannot doubt will be peremptorily enjoined by the proper Court.

If a connection between the two railroads alluded to is sought to be made, let it be properly applied for. For ourselves, we see no objection to such a connection, if made in the proper place—but we do see strong reasons why one of the handsomest avenues in our city, should not be spoiled by a road that could just as well, though not perhaps quite as *cheaply*, be located elsewhere. We see not half the objection to such a road going round the city, as we do to its going through any of our main thoroughfares.

FUNNY.

The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* of the 19th, really says, in its leading editorial:—

Whether there is an organized conspiracy against the Government, or not, we are unable to say; but there are rumors and whisperings in New York and in this city, that seem to indicate that there is one. We hear of men pretending that the only way to save the Union is to drive President Lincoln out of the White House and place there a military dictator. We hear of some who plainly say that this will be done within a week, who rejoice over the prospect, and who invite their acquaintances to rejoice with them.

Really, we cannot characterize the above as anything else than supremely ridiculous. Here is a Federal Government with say 800,000 men in arms to do its bidding. All it has to do is to be certain of the fidelity of its leading officers—especially the commanding generals—and it can laugh at all conspiracies, organized or unorganized.

And, even if generals would play traitor, the rank and file would not. The great masses of our soldiery, as of our people, believe in Republicanism and in Law, and would not become the tools of any military dictator. Why, chaos would come at the North if such a thing were attempted, and partially successful. The present condition of the South would be a paradise to it. But the whole thing is nonsensical.

CAPTURE OF KINGSTON.

Notwithstanding the recent dispatch from the rebel General Evans, it appears that General Foster has taken Kingston, N. C., capturing also 500 prisoners and 11 pieces of artillery.

Kingston is only 28 miles from Goldsboro, which is situated on the railroad leading from Richmond to Wilmington, Charleston, &c.

OUR LOSSES.—It is now stated that our losses at Fredericksburg were 1,400 killed, 8,000 wounded, and 800 taken prisoners—10,200 in all. Bad enough, but a good deal better than the 16,000 reported by certain newspaper correspondents.

On the rebel side, Gen. Lee says that their losses were about 1,800. But as one of the Richmond papers already has chronicled the arrival of 2,050 of the wounded in that city, and we have some seven or eight hundred rebel prisoners, it is probable the rebel loss was at least not below 4,000. If they had remained all the time in their intrenchments they probably would have fared still better.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE POEMS OF ADELAIDE A. PROCTOR. Ticknor & Fields, Boston. For sale by T. B. Peterson & Bros., Philadelphia.

The blue and gold of Ticknor & Fields' dainty series suit especially well with these graceful poems; ballads of quiet pathos and sweetness; with more passionate lyrics, throbbing with a sorrow which declares itself more and more distinctly in every line. These poems bear a filial and feminized likeness to those of "Barry Cornwall," enough to remind us continually of the relationship of their authors. Of the ballads, the story of "True Honors" is to our taste the sweetest; the "Cradle-Song of the Poor" the most pathetic. We extract a poem shorter than these as particularly characteristic, in its grace and suggestiveness, of Miss Proctor's style:

HOME-SICKNESS.

"Where I am, the halls are gilded,
Stored with pictures bright and rare;
Strains of deep melodious music
Float upon the perfumed air;—
Nothing stirs the dreary silence
Save the melancholy sea,
Near the poor and humble cottage
Where I fain would be!

"Where I am, the sun is shining,
And the purple windows glow,
Till their rich armorial shadows
Stain the marble floor below;—
Faded autumn leaves are trembling
On the withered jasmine-tree
Creeping round the little casement,
Where I fain would be!

"Where I am, the days are passing
O'er a pathway strewn with flowers;
Song and joy and starry pleasures
Crown the happy smiling hours;—
Slowly, heavily, and sadly,
Time with weary wings must flee,
Marked by pain, and toil, and sorrow,
Where I fain would be!

"Where I am, are glorious dreamings,
Science, genius, art divine;
And the great minds whom all honor
Inter-change their thoughts with mine;—
A few simple hearts are waiting,
Longing, wearying for me,
Far away, where tears are falling,
Where I fain would be!

"Where I am, all think me happy,
For so well I play my part,
None can guess, who smile around me,
How far distant is my heart,—
Far away, in a poor cottage,
Listening to the dreary sea,
There the treasures of my life are,
Where I fain would be!"

PROSPECTUS FOR 1863.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

The Publishers of THE POST take pleasure in announcing that their literary arrangements for the coming year are of a character to warrant them in promising a feast of good things to their thousands of readers. Among the contributors to THE POST we may now mention the following distinguished authors:—

MRS. ELLEN WOOD,
Author of "THE EARL'S HEIRS," "EAST LYNNE," "THE CHANNINGS," &c.

MARION HARLAND,
Author of "ALONE," "THE HIDDEN PATH," "MIRIAM," &c.

EDMUND KIRKE,
Author of "AMONG THE PINES."

AND

VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND,
Whose Domestic Sketches are so greatly admired.

During the coming year THE POST will endeavor to maintain its high reputation for CHOICE STORIES, SKETCHES and POETRY. Special Departments shall also be devoted as heretofore to AGRICULTURE, WIT AND HUMOR, RECEIPTS, NEWS, MARKETS, &c.

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In procuring the subscribers for this Premium, we of course prefer that the 30 subscribers should be procured independently of each other, at the regular terms of $2,00 for each subscriber. Where this cannot be done, the subscribers may be procured at any of our club rates, and the balance of the $60 forwarded to us in cash by the person desiring the machine.

Every person collecting names for the Sewing Machine Premium, should send the names with the money as fast as obtained, so that the subscribers may begin at once to receive their papers, and not become dissatisfied with the delay. When the whole number of names (30), and whole amount of money ($60), is received, the machine will be duly forwarded.

☞ Sample copies of THE POST sent gratis when requested.

Address DEACON & PETERSON,
NO. 319 WALNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

P. S.—Editors who give the above one insertion, or condense the material portions of it for their editorial columns, shall be *entitled* to an exchange, by sending us a marked copy of the paper containing the advertisement or notice.

THE BARBER'S GHOST.

A gentleman, travelling some years since in the upper part of this state, called at a tavern, and requested entertainment for the night. The landlord informed him that it was out of his power to accommodate him, as his house was already full. He persisted in stopping, as he, as well as his horse, were almost exhausted with travelling. After much solicitation, the landlord consented to his stopping, provided he would sleep in a certain room that had not been occupied for a long time, in consequence of a belief that it was haunted by the ghost of a barber, who was reported to have been murdered in that room some years before.

"Very well," says the man, "I'm not afraid of ghosts."

After having refreshed himself, he inquired of the landlord how and in what manner the room in which he was to lodge was haunted. The landlord replied that shortly after they retired to rest an unknown voice was heard, in a trembling and protracted accent, saying, "Do you want to be shaved?"

"Well," replied the man, "if he comes he may shave me."

He then requested to be shown to the apartment, in going to which he was conducted through a large room where were seated a great number of persons at a gambling-table. Feeling a curiosity which almost every one possesses after having heard ghost stories, he carefully searched every corner of his room, but could discover nothing but the usual furniture of the apartment. He then lay down, but did not close his eyes to sleep immediately; and in a few minutes he imagined he heard a voice saying—

"*Do you w-a-n-t to be s-h-a-v-e-d?*"

He arose from his bed and searched every part of the room, but could discover nothing. He again went to bed; but no sooner had he begun to compose himself to sleep, than the question was again repeated. He again arose and went to the window, the sound appearing to proceed from that quarter, and stood awhile silent. After a few moments of anxious suspense, he again heard the sound distinctly; and convinced that it was from without, he opened the window, when the question was repeated full in his ear, which startled him not a little. Upon a minute examination, however, he observed that the limb of a large oak tree, which stood under the window, projected so near the house that every breath of wind, to a lively imagination, made a noise resembling the interrogation—

"Do you w-a-n-t to be s-h-a-v-e-d?"

Having satisfied himself that his ghost was nothing more nor less than the limb of a tree coming in contact with the house, he again went to bed, and attempted to get asleep; but he was now interrupted by peals of laughter, and an occasional volley of oaths and curses, from the room where the gamblers were assembled. Thinking that he could turn the late discovery to his own advantage, he took a sheet from the bed and wrapped it around him, and taking the washbasin in his hand, and throwing a towel over his arm, proceeded to the room of the gamblers, and suddenly opening the door, walked in, exclaiming, in a tremulous voice—

"Do you w-a-n-t to be s-h-a-v-e-d?"

Terrified at the sudden appearance of the ghost, the gamblers were thrown into the greatest confusion in attempting to escape it—some jumping through the windows and others tumbling head over heels down stairs. Our ghost, taking advantage of a clear room, deliberately swept a large amount of the money from the table into the basin, and retired unseen to his own room.

The next morning he found the house in the utmost confusion. He was immediately asked if he rested well, to which he replied in the affirmative.

"Well, no wonder," said the landlord, "for the ghost, instead of going to his own room, made a mistake, and came to ours, frightened us out of the room, and took away every dollar of our money."

The guest, without being the least suspected, quietly ate his own breakfast, and departed, many hundred dollars the richer by the adventure.

HORACE JAYNE.

We publish by request the following lines from the pen of a well known lady, dedicated to the child of one of our prominent Philadelphians:—

Child of the pale and golden hair, boy of the sunny smile,
Lo, Heaven hath made thee wondrous fair, fair as its own sweet clime;
Thine be the power to mirror forth, should manhood crown thy youth—
Pure, golden grains, from wisdom's store, dug from the mine of truth.

Wert thou an angel, lost among the lovely stars of light?
And straying here hath found a home to comfort human sight!
In olden time fair angels dwelt among the sons of men,
When messages of love were sent, and to reprove of sin.

Of God's creative, glorious thought, a lovely symbol thou,
With happiness thy being's fraught, and on thy childish brow
Fair intellect hath found a place, sweet love illumed thine eyes;
And on thy lips pure innocence hath breathed from Paradise.

Let that great spirit permeate, and fill thy youthful soul,
And come it soon, or come it late, ere thou shall reach life's goal;
There in that land of love and light, a beauteous seraph thou,
Wearing a suit of armor bright, Christ's signet on thy brow. R. M. S.

MILITARY GOVERNOR OF FLORIDA.—A highly influential delegation of members of both houses of Congress, with Vice President Hamlin at their head, recently waited on the President, with a request, numerously signed by the loyal men of Florida, asking for the appointment of Hon. Eli Thayer as Military Governor of that state, with authority to raise 20,000 loyal emigrants. They also presented to the President a paper signed by 134 members of the Senate and House earnestly concurring in the request of the loyal men of Florida, and a paper from Major General Hunter, commander of the Department of the South, to the same effect. The Committee were well satisfied with the interview.

THE QUEEN OF SPAIN ON AMERICAN AFFAIRS.—The Queen of Spain, alluding to the difficulties arising from our necessary operations in the Gulf, says, "she feels confident that these events will not change the excellent relations heretofore maintained with the United States Government." This comes from a sovereign who has more reason to complain of the United States than any other Government in Europe. Yet when an opportunity is apparently presented to return the injury, her words are those of friendliness and good-will. The example is not only a good one to ourselves, but it should be remembered to the benefit of Spain.

☞ Fashionable people are apt to starve their happiness, in order to feed their vanity.

THE EMPRESS.

A flippant writer in St. James Magazine, not having the fear of Napoleon III. before him, thus describes the Empress Eugenie, as she appears after her morning bath:—

A magnificent clock has just struck twelve. Suddenly the folding doors are thrown open, and we are able to take an indiscreet glance at the other room, and the close white curtains draped round the Empress's bed. A lady in waiting appears in the doorway, and then steps on one side with deep reverence. Directly after the fairy-like form of the Empress Eugenie is visible, as she walks, with a light, elastic step into her boudoir. She proceeds to the sofa, and sinks into the soft cushions. She then dismisses her waiting-woman by a gentle nod; the doors close again noiselessly, and her Majesty is alone. She leans back on the cushions as if fatigued by the bath which she has just taken, so that her light muslin dress, with its countless lace-edged flounces, is gently raised, and exposes her dainty feet, in the white silk stockings and shoes, as high as the ankle. She seems to have been longing for the quiet and solitude of this room, for she has thrown back her beautiful head, surrounded with the pale golden hair, and appears to be in a reverie. The soft, azure eye is only half visible beneath the inimitable eyelid, and her entire appearance indicates exhaustion and fatigue. The lines of the face are so fine, so noble, and run into each other so harmoniously, that it seems as if a sculptor had incarnated his ideal. But the color of the cheeks is no longer that of youth. The forehead, broad and slightly arched, displays those fine ripple-marks which the woman of thirty fears, and the woman of thirty-six—for so old is the Empress—endures with a sigh. The whole expression of this wax-like countenance, with its enchanting blending of the Moorish and Germanic types, displays somewhat of southern languor; but if she were to smile, if words were to pass those exquisitely carved lips, the coldness of this face would melt away; the eyes would open to their full size, and sparkle like stars in a tropical heaven; and beauty would reappear, as if by enchantment, on these pale cheeks.

☞ Robert Hall was unhappy in his courtship of Miss Steel. When he was perhaps smarting beneath the disappointment, he met out to tea. The lady of the house said, who no very good taste:—"You are dull, Mr. Hall; we have no polished steel here to entertain you." "Oh, madam, that's not the slightest consequence; you have plenty of polished brass." His genius for happy retort never slumbered. One of his congregations sickly, querulous old mortal, met him in the street. "Ah, Mr. Hall, you have never been to see me—sir. I've been—very ill—been—at—Death's door—Mr. Hall." Hall replied:—"Why didn't you step in, sir? Why don't you step in?"

☞ When, almost a year ago, Gen. Burnside swept over the rebel entrenchments successively at Roanoke Island and Newbern, carrying them by main strength in the face of a terrific fire of artillery and musketry, the whole country rang with applause of his gallantry and capacity. Now that he has tried the same strategy upon a still stronger position much more formidably defended, thousands are ready to blame him for rashness and mismanagement. We do not admire this wisdom after the event, and shall endeavor to avoid it.

☞ "COW-COTTON."—A friend in Tennessee has sent us a specimen of "cow-cotton"—a novel among manufactures, uniting in its fabric both the animal and the vegetable kingdoms, being a mixture, half and half, of cotton and cow's hair. It makes a cheaper and stronger fabric than all cotton for common clothing. In gray color, its coarse grain, its tough fibre give it a little of the old-time homespun look, when men wore linsey-woolsey. The rule of manufacture is by hand-carding, as practiced by our mothers and grandmothers. If the pure southern stuff that is fed to the Manchester mills should utterly fail, the English aristocracy may be glad to hear that their backs need not go bare, but can be clothed with cow-cotton.—*Independent.*

☞ A man is circumscribed in all his ways by God's providence, just as he is in a ship; for though he may walk freely upon the decks, he may go whither the ship bears him.

☞ COFFEE.—A friend informs us that parched sweet corn is excellent to mix with Java coffee—half and half.

☞ A Congressman, speaking the other night to the President of the bitter cold night, said, what a terrible night this must be for the unfortunate soldiers, who were badly provided with shelter. The President answered—"Would that I had one of their places! There is a man in the army with whom I would not willingly exchange places to-night."

☞ "Old Abe" recently put $1,000 in his wife's purse, and told her to distribute it among the sick and wounded soldiers in Washington. Like a good wife, she obeyed her husband.

☞ The venerable Dr. Laban Clark, of the M. E. Church, tells one of the many laughable scenes of his ministry, the story of a man in Landaff, N. H., who, in his zeal for the conversion of his wife, prayed, "Lord, fill her with *animosity*." Animosity too often attends a mistaken conversion.

☞ Members of the Cabinet are about to marry, say the Washington gossips, and widows of former distinguished Senators are to be the blushing brides.

☞ "Husband, if an honest man is God's noblest work, what is an honest woman?" "His rarest, dear."

☞ OUR WOUNDED.—The latest reports of our losses in the late battle make the number less than has been reported—less than 1,400 killed and 8,000 wounded—a large portion of whom were but slightly wounded. We lost 500 prisoners and took about as many.

LATEST NEWS.

From the Army of the Potomac.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, Dec. 21.—Yesterday morning, at daylight, about a hundred of the Hampton Legion (rebel cavalry) entered Occaquan, and captured a lieutenant and thirty privates of the 10th New York cavalry, guarding the telegraph wires. Eleven sutlers and six sutlers' wagons were seized by the rebels.

No new movements by the enemy have been observed since we evacuated the south side of the river.

It is not known to Gen. Burnside's staff that he has tendered his resignation of the command of this army, as stated in a Washington correspondence.

Everything is quiet along the river.

Miscellaneous.

REPORTED RESIGNATION OF GENERAL BURNSIDE.—It is confidently reported at Washington that General Burnside has tendered his resignation of the command of the Army of the Potomac.

Up to noon on Saturday, the resignation of Secretary Seward had not been accepted. It is also reported that Secretary Chase has resigned.

Governor Curtin's mission to Washington to arrange for the speedy transportation within the State of Pennsylvania soldiers has been entirely successful.

General Curtis has received a communication from the rebel Holmes, forwarded by direction of Jeff. Davis, inquiring as to the recent shooting of guerillas at Palmyra.

A dispatch to Gen. Curtis from Gen. Herron says that the rebel Hindman is supposed to have retreated across the Arkansas river. Many of the men in his army are coming over to the Union army.

It is rumored that 6,000 Texan rebels, with artillery, are marching on Santa Fé, by way of Los Vigos and El Paso, but the report is not confirmed.

Gen. Schofield has left St. Louis to resume command of the Army of the Frontier.

CAIRO, Dec 20.—Midnight.—A body of rebel cavalry, variously estimated at from 2,000 to 8,000, made a raid on the railroad three miles this side of Jackson, Tenn., yesterday morning. After firing into a team, they tore up the track for a considerable distance, and burned a long trestel work.

THE PROBABLE DESTINATION AND OBJECTS OF THE BANKS EXPEDITION.—It is now supposed that the Banks expedition is going to New Orleans. The New York Herald says that Banks goes there to take the place of Gen. Butler. Mobile is then to be captured, and communication established and kept up between the two places. Gen. Banks will have a force of nearly 70,000 men under him, which can easily do the work. Attacks will also be made in various directions. A main object of the expedition is to counteract the supposed projects of the French in Mexico and the southern states. Texas is also to be occupied to prevent the shipment of cotton and cut off the supplies of provisions for the rebels, beside which he is to co-operate with the Mississippi expedition in keeping that river clear.

☞ Miss Fantadling says the first time she locked arms with a young man, she felt like Hope leaning on her anchor. Poetic young woman that.

☞ PRENTICE AGAIN.—Prentice, after quoting John Locke,' that a blind man took his idea of scarlet from the sound of a trumpet, says that a hoop skirt, hanging out of a shop door, always reminds him of the peel of a belle!

☞ It is no misfortune for a Miss to lose her *good* name, when a bachelor can give her a better one.

☞ A right reverend controversalist well said, "A little oil makes the knife cut more keenly."

☞ Little Frank, who is much interested in stories of wild animals, being told that the lion always pauses before springing upon its prey, remarked—"I like the lion best of all the animals, because he gives you time to pray before he eats you!"—*Portland Transcript.*

☞ Babies are the tyrants of the world. The Emperor must tread softly; baby sleeps! Mozart must hush his *nascent requiem;* baby sleeps! Phidias must drop his hammer and chisel; baby sleeps! Demosthenes, be dumb! baby sleeps!"

☞ Praise is sometimes as hurtful as censure. It is as bad to be blown into the air as to be cast into a pit.

☞ The following is from a religious, North Carolina newspaper: "In New Orleans on Saturday, Miss Rose McKinney, aged *seven years*, severely stabbed William Scully, Esq., aged *five years*, with a knife. No cause assigned, but probably *jealousy* was at the bottom of the affair." What an age we have grown to!

☞ It is related that a rebel officer, captured in a recent battle, asked wonderingly, "Where is this Iowa that sends forty thousand soldiers into the field? What part of the map is it on? I never heard of it till the war commenced."

☞ A manufacturer of thread, having accidentally cut his nose, took one of his gummed spool labels to close the cut. On going home he wondered why every one laughed at him. Looking in the glass he read on the label that his nose was "warranted 350 yards long!"

☞ "My wife," said a wag the other day, "came near calling me honey last night." "Indeed, how was that?" "Why, she called me old beeswax."

☞ At what point do armies generally enter hostile cities? At the point of the bayonet.

☞ "So poor Miss Prim is dead at last, Miss Singleton?" "Oh, yes, poor critter; she couldn't bear to hear how Dr. Squibbs was a sidling up to Widow Wimpole, so she just filled with grief and sunk under it." "Poor, unfort'nate creatur!" said the old maid. "How does my new cap look?"

☞ To be clothed in rags used to be an indication of poverty, but now beggars can sell their old clothes for a small fortune.

☞ Dr. Prescott and his wife celebrated their golden wedding recently in Farmington, Me. Among the presents was a box labeled "Homœopathic pills," which was found to be full of gold dollars.

☞ The man who shows that he is vain of having done us a favor pays himself and saves us the trouble.

☞ A man of letters is often a man of two natures: one a book nature, the other a human nature. These often clash with

CHRISTMAS.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

"And the angel said unto them, 'fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings, of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David—a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord.'"—*Luke 2, chap. 10, 11 v.*

Sweetly the moon looks down. On Judah's
mountains brown,
Shepherds were watching their flocks in the
night:
O'er Mamre's(1) verdant vale, wanders the even-
ing gale,
Stealing mid flowers, beneath the faint light:
Far in the eastern sky, Carmel's dark summit
high,
Rises majestic, and looks on the sea,
Where 'neath the midnight breeze heaves dark
Asphaltites,(2)
'Neath whose dread waters the doomed cities be.

Soft sleeps the silver beam on Cedron's winding
stream,
Shedding mild glories on hills far away,
Charming each eye that roves o'er Jerud's(3)
olive groves,
With a soft beauty, unknown to the day;
Far roll the billows free of the great western
sea,(4)
Through the dim distance all mistily seen,
All like a lovely dream doth to the shepherd
seem,
Silently watching his flocks on the green.

Lo! on the shepherd's gaze what rays of glory
blaze!
Gleaming like rainbows, athwart the dark sky!
Ah! 'tis an angel bright, come from the realms
of light,
Glancing the shine of the regions on high!
"Com'st thou a vision sent—for our sins chas-
tisement,
Bringest thou a blessing—or bearest thou the
rod?
Oh! if on vengeance bent thou com'st in anger
sent,
How shall we brook the displeasure of God!"

Hark! 'tis the angel's voice—fear not! ye shall
rejoice,
Behold good tidings of great joy I bring,
Which unto all shall be—for ye this day shall
see
Born unto you—the Christ—the promised King;
Lo! a babe's form he chose; wrapped in his
swaddling clothes,
Lowly and meek in the manger he lies;
Where can such love be found!—upon the lowly
ground,
E'en for your sins, lies the Prince of the skies.

Look! o'er the night's deep haze ten thousand
glories blaze;
Thousands of radiant forms the sky illume;
Oh! when to man was given such opening view
of heaven,
Chasing the dark, mystic shades from the tomb:
Hark! how the Cherubim answer the Seraphim!
"Glory to God in the highest," they sing:
"Good will to sons of earth!—Peace in a Sa-
viour's birth!"
This the glad message those holy ones bring.

Come!—let us follow them—follow to Bethle-
hem;
See! in the manger the Holy one lies!
Softly he slumbers now, round the Redeemer's
brow,
The ray of glory shines that never dies.
Bendeth each shepherd's knee, before that ma-
jesty:
Low bows each head to the infant—the God!
All blessed be His name!—who for our comfort
came,
Who for our sins hath touched the dark earth's
sod!

Well might the Magian(5) watch when his star
began
To light with holy ray the eastern skies;
Well might they journey far, lit by that guiding
star,
'Till it hath led them where the Saviour lies;
Emblem'd by them may we Thy *inward* guide-
light see,
Luring our spirits with influence sweet,
'Till by its holy ray doubt's night is chased
away,
And we may worship, like them, at Thy feet.

Sweet as the balmy air of Sharon's valleys fair,
Sighing where roses bloom loveliest to sight;
Pure as the crystal tide from smitten Horeb's
side;
Chasing the darkness—and lending the light:
Thus shall Thy teachings be—Hope of eternity!
Long we to know what thy love shall impart:
Even as David sighed for the well's water-
tide,(6)
Sigh we for waters that comfort the heart.

From Sinai's hoary head—Tabor's green pyra-
mid,(7)
From ev'ry valley of Judah's blessed sod,
Where Leb'non's cedars grow o'er Mizpeh's(8)
vales below,
Let sounds of praise ascend—Glory to God!
Yet, let not Palestine alone the praise assign:
Throughout the Universe hosannas ring
From all to whom is given this greatest Gift of
Heaven,
Jesus the Comforter—and Christ our King.

Lord! once again we see Thy anniversary!
Give us all hearts to *feel* the sacred time:
Oh! give our spirits joy!—keep us from sin's
alloy:
Guard us from evil thoughts—and deeds of
crime:
Teach us to follow Thee—forgive each enemy:
Teach us humility, and how to pray:
May all of human kind joy in Thy mercy find,
And *gladly* turn to Thee—this Christmas day.

FRANK.

(1.) Mamre—"A fertile valley near Hebron, where Abraham dwelt."—*Smiley's Scripture Geog.*

(2.) Asphaltites—"The Dead Sea—this lake is supposed to occupy the site of the ancient cities, Sodom, Gomorrah, Adma and Zeboim."—*Morse's Am. Geography vol. 2.*

(3.) Jerud, a mountain of Judea—"These mountains abound in olive, fig and other fruit trees, covering their sides to the very summits."—"*Rickitt's Notes of Travel*," *vol 1, p. 107.*

(4.) Great Western Sea—"denotes the Mediterranean, west of Canaan."—*Smiley's Scrip. Geog.*

(5.) Magian—"There came wise men from the East."—*Persia?*

(6.) David's well—"And David longed, and said, oh! that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem."—*11. Samuel, 23 chap., 5 v.*

(7.) Tabor's green pyramid—"Six miles north of Nazareth stands the hill of Tabor, forming a cone of verdure."—*Malte-Brun, vol. 1, p. 359.*

(8.) Mizpeh—The Vale of Mizpeh, near the "E. point of Palestine.—*Ancient Atlas.*

"You

THE WHITE POWDERS;

OR,

TRIED FOR HIS LIFE.

I had been away from England three years. In that time I had eaten oyster suppers in New York, polked at Saratoga, taken lonely and romantic walks at Niagara, caught delicious white fish in the translucent waters of Mackinaw, and shot a buffalo on the prairies of Nebraska. I might have dug for gold in California or Columbia, had I not been taken suddenly with a great and inexplicable longing to see again the white cliffs, the green fields and hedges, and the quaint, pretty, and most comfortable villages of dear old England.

I can speak now of the reason of this long absence. My father, who had saved for me a small property, which he hoped I would increase, had educated me for the noble profession of the law. I was reading through my terms with the usual industry, and was not quite insensible to the blandishments of society, when it was my misfortune to fall in love. The expression seems to me an appropriate one.

Isabel Goodwin was certainly one of the most beautiful of those who are, in their own right, queens of society. To the fairest type of English beauty she added graces, accomplishments, and a boundless ambition. Without rank or wealth she held her place, and aspired to rival those who had both. I was dazzled by her beauty; I admired her queenly bearing; and I became her passionate worshipper.

She was fond of admiration. If I was sometimes grieved, jealous, and maddened at the encouragement she gave to one or another of the crowd that fluttered about her, and burned the incense of flattery to her charms, I still had a sort of pride in her attractiveness; and a tender look, a word of fondness, a sigh, or the soft pressure of her hand, would send me home intoxicated with delight. I believed myself to be the favored lover; the admiration she received was my triumph.

The best friend I had was Arthur Mellon. He was two years older than I; was in good position in a Government office, with fair prospects of advancement, and some expectations beside. We were true friends. Arthur had saved my life when we were at school together. I lay cramped and paralyzed on the bottom of a deep pool in the river where we were bathing. We had been trying our skill with other boys in diving, to see which could remain under the longest; so, when I had disappeared, and remained for a long period, no one was surprised. They waited to see my head shoot above the surface. I lay on the bottom sensible but powerless. I could see my comrades on the bank; I could even hear them talk. The sounds of their voices grew fainter and fainter, but I was not afraid. I knew that, as soon as they understood what was the matter, Arthur, if no other, would come and save me.

He was already dressing on the bank, when he exclaimed, "Where is Harry?" His voice sent a thrill to my heart, as I lay, paralyzed in every limb, drowning. In a moment more he had stripped off his clothes, and plunged into the pool. He was cool and cautious even in his haste to save me. He swam round, and took me by one of my ankles. I felt an impulse to grasp him, so strong that it might have given me the power; but with an effort of self-control, I did not even try to help myself. I was drawn into shallow water, and quickly was out; and after a struggle, far more painful than the half-drowning had been, recovered.

Need I say that Arthur was, henceforth, more my friend than ever? In London he spent half his leisure hours in my chambers, or in the excursions we took together to the mountains or the sea. He had been away on public business when I first became acquainted with Isabel. I wrote him about her, raved about her. I was impatient to have him see her at the earliest moment after his return. Not less had I told her of Arthur; and I had excited the expectations of both.

There was a party on the very night of his return to London, and I insisted that he should go, tired as he was with his journey from Dublin since morning, at be presented to her whom I now dared to call *my* Isabel.

I saw, with a twinge of jealousy, which I felt to be inexpressibly mean and contemptible, that Arthur and Isabel were much impressed with each other. They polked and waltzed together. How keenly I watched them! Arthur was exciting, brilliant, fascinating; Isabel danced as I had never seen her dance before, and short in her nervous manner and heightened color, how much she was interested and flattered by his attentions.

Arthur congratulated me, but he was embarrassed. Isabel was far more self-possessed; she said he was a splendid fellow—she had no idea she should like him so well; and she did her best to bind me with her tenderness; but I had wished them with too jealous an eye not to see that my position was in danger.

Why go on with a miserable story? Isabel was, I cannot confess to me, for we were under no engagement. I see now that she would have dropped me at any moment for a more desirable *parti*. I was her bird in hand; but she knew it there were better in the bush, and she threw me away the moment she felt sure of one of them.

It is true that Arthur was a better match than I. His position already good, was assured for the future with the prospect of more than I was ever likely to gain by any eminence in my profession. He was my superior, also, as a society man; more ready, more brilliant and distinguished. I forgave Arthur; but I could not be a witness to his happiness. I could not forgive Isabel. A month before the marriage, I was on the steamer, bound for New York.

I heard from her sometimes during my absence. Arthur did not write. He would have been glad to have done so; but he could not intrude even the offices of friendship upon the misery that had driven me to the wild solitudes beyond the Mississippi. A lady, who knew and pitied my sufferings, wrote to me. At first she said very little of Arthur and his wife. Then there came stories—idle gossip, I hoped—of indiscretions, jealousies, estrangements, and even of scandal. I could not believe that Isabel, false as she had been to me—heartless and worldly as I thought her—could ever be guilty of worse than vanity and ambition. Admiration was, no doubt, a necessary of life to her. She might annoy Arthur; but I could not believe that she could injure him more deeply. But the stories grew worse and worse; and I could not but confess that I had been saved from a greater misery than I had endured, and that, if Arthur had wronged me, he had been sufficiently punished. I confess also that I sometimes thought that, had Isabel not yielded to the temptations of ambition, and had married one she truly loved, all might have been well; but this was a momentary vanity. Arthur was a man to make any good woman happy. He would never have married Isabel had he not felt certain that her heart was irretrievably his own. He could not rob me of what I did not possess.

Suddenly I was taken, as I have said, with a great longing to return to England. It did not seem a home-sickness, such as attacks the Swiss in foreign lands. The English, love home as they may, can stay away from it. They have the power of colonizing the world, and may yet cover it all over with their conquering races. But I felt in a hurry to return. I took the shortest route; first to St. Paul's, on the Upper Mississippi; then down the river, to the first line of railway which would take me to the Atlantic. I looked for the fastest boat and the most rapid trains. I made no stop in strange cities. My curiosity to see American life was gone, and I dashed along the southern shore of the great Lakes, and through the mountains to New York, just in time to embark on one of the fleetest steamers of the Cunard line, which, in less than ten days, landed me safely in Liverpool. With the same feeling of hurry I took the first express-train to London, and did not lose an hour before driving to Brompton and calling on the lady, a distant relative and old friend, who had been my correspondent.

When my name was announced, she sprang towards me, kissed my cheek, and exclaimed:

"Then you got my letter?"

"No; I have had no letter from you for months. I have been away in the wilderness, where they could not reach me; and I did not stop for them on my way. But what is it? Has anything happened?"

"You have not heard about poor Arthur?"

"Not a word. Isabel has not run off with a Russian prince?"

"Oh, worse than that—that is—but no matter. Harry, Isabel is dead."

I felt the blood settle back upon my heart—my eyes were dim—the room turned round. I believe I should have fallen, had not my friend helped me to the sofa. I am not a woman to faint away; but the shock was sudden, and it hurt me more than I should have thought it could. A glass of wine was brought, and I was myself again.

"Poor Arthur!" said I; "how does he bear it?"

"Poor Arthur, indeed! You may well say, poor Arthur! What has not that woman made him suffer? And now he is charged with her murder."

"Murder!"

"Murder. She died suddenly, with symptoms of poison. There was an inquest, and the chemist who examined the body discovered arsenic. They proved that Arthur had often quarrelled with her, and was jealous. Well he might be, poor fellow! Somehow he had bought arsenic just before her death. They found some in his desk. When she was first taken ill, he insisted on nursing her. He was devoted to her, in spite of his jealousy and annoyances. Everything told against him, and he was committed to Newgate, and is to be tried for his life."

I need not say that, at the earliest moment when it was possible to get admission, I hastened to Newgate. I found Arthur, pale and sad enough, but resigned to his fate. He fell upon my bosom. We were boys again. The past, that had sent its black cloud between us, was gone. We were clasped in each other's arms, as in the lighter griefs of our boyhood. All jealousy, all hard feeling, had vanished from my mind. My noble Arthur was in trouble—ay, in peril—and I had come to save him. So it seemed at the moment. That he was as innocent as I myself of the hideous crime with which he was charged, I could not doubt for a moment.

He told me all—the little that he knew. He spoke carefully, and even tenderly, of the dead.

"I know you have forgiven me, Harry," he said; "so I do not ask it. I thought I was doing right. We are all egotists in our affections. I have been greatly tried."

"How was it, Arthur," I asked, "that you chanced to have poison in your desk?"

"It was left there, with other chemicals, by my predecessor, who amused himself with chemical experiments. When I took the desk, I allowed it to remain, with some vague idea that it might be useful some time to kill the rats or other vermin."

"Well, we will get this fellow, and prove that he left it."

"He went to India, and died there a year after."

That hope was gone; but I did not despair.

"Who are the witnesses against you?" I asked.

"Only the servants, poor things! They testified to what they had seen and heard. My temper is not so good as it was, and—she—was sometimes very trying. When she became ill, I reproached myself, and wished to do all I could for her. Her maid was new, and unused to her ways, and I took care of her. The woman, perhaps, did not like my interference. The fact, at any rate, made a strong impression against me."

"The maid was new; how long had she been with you?"

"Only a month. *Her* old favorite, Norah, went home to Ireland to be married, and has gone with her husband, I suppose, to America."

"Had she—had Isabel ever given you any reason to fear that she would kill herself?"

"No; assuredly not. She enjoyed the pleasures of existence too keenly. I am sure that she was never purposely the cause of her own death."

I sifted the ground all over. There was no clue anywhere, and the only hope I saw was in finding Norah. But what could she, who had been a month away, know about the death of her mistress? The lawyers engaged for the defence could see no use in her testimony, except to prove, what everybody knew, that Arthur was very much attached to her mistress, and sometimes jealous and irritable. Was it likely that she could prove anything more? Besides, she was probably on the Atlantic.

Not a moment was to be lost. The trial would come on in a week; and little as others hoped from Norah's evidence, I determined that, if still in the country, she should come and testify, at least, to her master's kindness and love of her late mistress.

But Arthur had not got Norah's address.—He did not even know, or could not remember, her surname.

"Give it up, my dear fellow," said he; "it is of no use. What good can Norah be, if you could find her? She has gone by this time."

But I would not give it up. I clung desperately to the idea of this Irish girl—because, perhaps, there was nothing else to cling to. I set off for the Catholic chapel nearest Arthur's residence. I found the priest, and, after thinking a moment, he remembered Norah. He took me into the chapel, and there, on one of the best seats, was still a little card inscribed with the name of Norah O'Regan. I copied the name in my note-book.

"Can your reverence tell me where she lived in Ireland?" said I.

"Indeed, I cannot," said he; "but I remember now writing a letter for her to send to some relatives of hers at Enniscorthy, county Wexford."

Here was a clue; and a few hours more saw me dashing along the North-Western Railway, through Rugby, the Trent valley, and Chester, and so along the feet of the Welsh mountains, and across the Menai Straits to Holyhead, and thence by steamer to Kingstown. Here, too much in haste to make the proper inquiries, I took the railway to Rathdrum, and so missed the stage-coach at Wicklow. But I lost no time. A jaunting car took me down the sweet vale of Avoca, and I was soon in Enniscorthy.

The parish priest was my first resource.—He knew the O'Regans, of course, and went with me to find them. They lived in a respectable mud-walled cottage, with a roof of thatch and a floor of clay; and the pig very politely stepped out of the doorway as soon as he saw his reverence coming, and allowed us to enter.

They knew Norah, God bless her! Wasn't she their own cousin? hadn't she sent them money, when the times were hard, to pay the rint? and hadn't she been married to Dennis Magrath?

"And where is Dennis Magrath?" I asked anxiously.

"Is it where is he? It's far out on the salt sea he'll be by this time," said the woman.

"Are you sure they have gone?" his reverence asked.

"Sure I am they talked of going; for I heard it from Ellen Rooney, an' she was over to Kilkenny, and danced at the wedding."

"Then Norah was married at Kilkenny; and if she has gone, they started from there?" said I.

The woman looked at the priest, and on receiving a reassuring nod, assented. There was nothing to do but to go to Kilkenny.—The hours were speeding, and there was no railway to annihilate time or space. A jaunting-car, with a fleet horse, at an extra price, was the only resource; and I was on the road again. A few hours of hard posting, with frequent change of horses, took me in sight of the old round tower, the venerable cathedral, and the historic castle of Kilkenny, and the humble home of the Magraths.

Norah had gone. Five days before, she had left with her husband for Liverpool, to sail from there to America. Should I be foiled at last? Her friends believed that she was "far away on the billow." I knew that packet ships did not always sail on the appointed day, and that, even when the winds were fair, they would lay over a day or two for more freight or passengers.

But I had gained one more clue, which might be of service. Norah's ship was the packet *Emerald*, of New York. I could find by the papers if she had sailed. I took the first train to Dublin, and the night steamer to Liverpool. The route via Holyhead would have been a shorter one; but the Liverpool boat would arrive before the packet sailed, if she was still in port. I wanted also a few hours sleep.

We were twenty miles or so from the mouth of the Mersey, when I saw a large ship coming towards us.

"Captain," said I to the commander of our pig-laden steamer, "can you tell me what ship that is?"

"Yankee packet ship, sir," said he curtly.

"Do you happen to know what ship it is?" I asked eagerly.

"No, sir. Can't say I do. No time to keep the run of all the ships that come out of Liverpool. You can take my glass, sir, and when she gets a little nearer you can see her name for yourself."

I took the proffered glass, and in fifteen minutes more I saw, full glittering on her prow, from which the port-signs had not yet been removed, the name: "EMERALD, OF NEW YORK."

I rushed to the skipper, and said,

"Captain, I must see a person on that ship. Will you run alongside of her?"

"Couldn't do it, sir."

"I will pay you."

"Wouldn't do it for twenty pounds, sir."

"I will pay you more than twenty, and whatever is right for the detention. It is a matter of life and death. I have a friend whose life is in peril, and there is a person on that ship who may save him from the gallows."

"My God! you don't say so? I'll be along side of her directly."

In ten minutes more I sprang into the shrouds of the noble ship. There was a crowd of emigrant passengers forward, taking their last look at Old England, and hoping, the most of them, to get a glimpse of Ireland once more before they left her for ever.

I knew that the captains of ships did not like any interference with their crews or passengers after they have taken charge of them, so I resolved to tell the gentlemanly as well as sailor-like master on the quarter-deck my business. I explained it as briefly as possible, and he sent for Norah Magrath, who came aft wonderingly, closely followed by her husband.

"Norah," said I, "you know Father Donovan in London?"

"To be sure I do, sir; and it's plased intirely I'd be to see him this blessed minute."

"You lived with Mrs. Mellon?"

"Indade an' I did, your honor; and I hope it's well she is, and the nice gentleman her husband."

"Norah, Mrs. Mellon is dead!"

"Dead! God rest her soul! Sure you don't mane it?"

"She is dead; and Mr. Mellon, my friend, is in Newgate, and may be hanged for poisoning her."

"Poisoning! Hanged! Och, sir, you cannot mane that! Sure, an' he loved the very ground she trod upon. Murther her? Niver a bit?"

"Would she kill herself, Norah?"

"The poor lady—no! she was light and giddy, and made him jealous sometimes; but she would niver have killed herself; she would not commit such a sin."

"Was she ever ill, Norah. Did she ever take any medicine?"

"Never sick a day, your honor; and the only medicine I ever knew her to take was the little white powders for her complexion. She told me once that it was them that made her so beautiful."

A thought struck me. Here was a possible clue to something.

"Norah," said I, "will you go back with me to London? I will pay your fare and your husband's to America, and pay you both for your time. I believe your evidence will save poor Mr. Mellon's life."

"Please God, I will go, sir. I will just spake to Dennis."

They talked together a few moments, and then came toward me. I saw how it was settled.

"You see, we are going to settle in America," said Norah. "All our things are on board. If Dennis don't go now, we might lose a good chance. Would you mind, sir, giving Dennis what it would cost if he stayed with me, and I wait and go to him when the trial is over?"

The arrangement, so thoroughly thrifty and characteristic, I closed with at once. In a minute more, Norah had a bundle of clothing in her hand; and we climbed over the side, and got upon the paddle-wheel of the steamer.

There was no sad or tender parting. The bridegroom and bride simply shook hands, with a mutual and perfect trust, in each other and in Providence. Norah wiped her eyes as the ship was fading in the distance, but in a few moments more she had cheerfully resigned herself to do her duty.

But the time was passing. We did not reach London an hour too soon. The trial had begun when I hurried into the court with our only important witness. The physician who made the post-mortem examination was giving his evidence.

There were traces of poison in several organs, and the chemical analysis left no doubt that this poison was arsenic. The circumstances were certainly against the prisoner. The jurymen lowered upon him ominously.

But the medical witness, a gentleman of high intelligence, was to be cross-examined; and now I found a use for some slight knowledge of chemistry. At my suggestion, the prisoner's counsel put the following questions, which I give with the answers.

"Have you ever known, or is it a matter of authentic record, that arsenic is taken in small doses as a cosmetic, to improve the complexion?"

"It is sometimes used for that purpose."

"Is it also administered as a medicine for certain diseases?"

"Yes, undoubtedly."

"Now, sir, is it not a fact well known to medical science, that arsenic, taken for some time in small doses may accumulate in the system, so as to produce violent and even fatal action?"

"It is possible."

"Are there not cases of such cumulative action?"

"Yes."

"One question more. If a person in the habit of taking arsenic, either as a medicine or a cosmetic, were to die suddenly from any cause, would not arsenic be found in the liver and other viscera by a chemical analysis?"

"There is no doubt that it would."

"That will do, sir."

We called our witness, Norah Magrath. She testified to having lived more than two years with Mrs. Mellon; to the uniform kindness and affection of her husband; and to the nature of their domestic difficulties. She was sure that he loved "the very ground she trod upon," and that if he was sometimes jealous and out of temper, they always made it up; and she was sure that he would not have harmed her for the world.

"Was it within your knowledge, witness that the deceased lady ever gave her husband any ground for jealousy?"

"No, your honor, not that ever I saw; but she was very handsome, and liked to be admired."

"Witness, you say she was very handsome. Did your mistress ever take any thing for her complexion?"

"Yes, sir; sure an' she did often."

"Do you know what it was?"

"It was a white powder, like."

"A white powder that she rubbed on her skin?"

"No, your honor; it was a powder that she swallowed."

"What did she call it?"

"I never heard any name for it."

"How do you know that she took it for her complexion, and not as a medicine for some disease?"

"Because she told me in a joking way, that if I would take some, it would make me as white and pretty as she was."

"Where did she keep this white powder?"

"In a little drawer of her writing-desk."

"Is that writing-desk portable, witness?" inquired the judge.

"Is it what, your lordship?"

"Can it be brought into court?"

"Aisily enough, your lordship."

"The court will take a recess while this desk is produced."

Two officers went with Norah, and returned with the writing-desk, in an inner and concealed drawer of which was discovered an ounce glass-stoppered bottle, about a third full of a white powder. It was identified as the bottle from which Mrs. Mellon took her cosmetic; and a chemist pronounced it to be ARSENIC.

The jury did not require the eloquence of counsel nor the judge's luminous charge to bring in a verdict of "*Not guilty.*" And scarcely an effort was made to suppress the cheers of the crowd when that verdict was announced, and I took Arthur Mellon by the hand, and led him forth to life and liberty.

Our trials have not been in vain. If Alfred wronged me, bitterly did he atone for the wrong by sufferings that seem to have added many years to his life. We seldom speak of Isabel, and we are more friends than ever.

Norah, well rewarded in feelings and purse, with our best wishes, and what she prized much more,—the coveted blessing of Father Donovan,—went to America in a fast steamer; and when the packet-ship *Emerald's* passengers were landed at the Battery at New York, and Dennis walked out of Castle Garden, he found his rosy and happy wife waiting to welcome him to the New World.

MY LITTLE PICTURE.

I have sent you a little picture
Of a face you used to know,
And I ask you to guard and keep it
For the sake of years ago.

As a token of Peace and Friendship,
I have sent it across the sea,
To ask if, as I have forgiven,
You too have forgiven me.

Not to call up the love that is gone,
Or to bring back the sad dead past;
Or the blossoms of hope that faded
In the biting wintry blast.

Not to recall the tight grasp of hands
That told what lips could not speak;
Or the long last kiss that gave "Farewell,
And branded it on the cheek.

Nor to tell of a weary, wasting pain,
The wish for a well-loved face,
The useless longing to fill once more
The heart's cold vacant place.

The sobs o'er the love that passed away,
The cry of woe's keen smart,
That echoed, unanswer'd and unheard,
Through the chambers of the heart.

But to tell of bygones forgotten,
And bid thee pardon the past,
And take from the hand I offer
Peace and friendship at the last.

It will look at you gently and kindly,
And bid you be happy again,
And tell you to bury the wretched years
Of our passion and our pain.

It will tell that though life may be weary,
There are bright days for us still,
If we live with a true and honest heart,
And a firm and upright will.

And through the dim coming future,
As the great years roll along,
It will whisper some sweet words of comfort,
And sing you a cheering song.

It will ask you to look far onward,
To the land where spirits meet,
To the calm for the weary heart-ache,
And the rest for weary feet.

Then take care of my little picture,
And do not cast it away;
'Tis the face that you used to look at
And love in a bygone day.

T. D.

JUDGE NOT.—"I wouldn't have done this or that!" How often do we hear this declaration! and how absurd it is. Who knows what persons may do till they are tried and tempted? Not we or you. It is one thing to sit calmly down and theorise about life and its mischances, and another to meet them face to face, when they sweep over us like a whirlwind before we have time to cry, "Lord, save us!" Therefore, when you see an erring brother that has committed a crime, do not say, "*I* would not have done so." Wait till your turn comes, or rather, do not wait till then; but, avoiding vain boasting, lean only on Him who giveth help in time of our greatest need. This only is our safety in the difficult lesson of self-government.

☞ Terror is strongest when undefined.—If we knew what death was like, men would as soon die as sleep.

LITTLE FEET.

Up with the sun at morning,
Away to the garden he hies,
To see if the sleepy blossoms
Have begun to open their eyes.
Running a race with the wind,
With a step as light and fleet,
Under my window I hear
The patter of little feet.

The child is our "speaking picture,"
A birdling that chatters and sings,
Sometimes a sleeping cherub—
(Our other one has wings.)
His heart is a charmed casket,
Full of all that's cunning and sweet,
And no harp-strings hold such music
As follows his twinkling feet.

When the glory of sunset opens
The highway by angels trod,
And seems to unbar the city
Whose Builder and Maker is God,
Close to the crystal portal,
I see by the gates of pearl
The eyes of our other angel—
A twin born little girl.

And [illegible] taught and directed
To guide [illegible] footsteps aright,
So that I be accounted worthy
To walk in sandals of light,
And hear amid songs of welcome
From messengers trusty and fleet,
On the starry floor of heaven
The patter of little feet.

VERNER'S PRIDE.

BY MRS. HENRY WOOD,

AUTHOR OF "THE CHANNINGS," "EAST LYNNE," "THE EARL'S HEIRS," "A LIFE'S SECRET," ETC.

[Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1863, by Deacon & Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CHAPTER LI.

AN UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL.

Deborah and Amilly West were sitting over the fire in the growing dusk of a February evening. Their sewing lay on the table: some home dresses they were making for themselves, for they had never too much superfluous cash for dress-makers, with fashionable patterns and fashionable prices. It had grown too dark to work, and they had turned to the fire for a chat, before the tea and lights came in.

"I tell you, Amilly, it is of no use playing at concealment, or trying to suppress the truth," Deborah was saying. "She is as surely going as that the other two went; as sure as sure can be. I have always felt that she would go. Mr. Lionel was talking to me only yesterday. He was not satisfied with his brother: at least, he thought it as well to act as though he were not satisfied with him: and he was about to ask Dr. Hayes—"

Her voice died away. Master Cheese had come in with a doleful face.

"Miss Deb, I'm sent up to Deerham Hall. There's a bothering note come from Miss Hautley to Jan, about one of the servants, and, he says, I am to go up and see what it is."

"Well?" returned Miss Deb, wondering why Master Cheese should come in to give the information to her. "You couldn't expect Mr. Jan to go up, after being out all day, as he has."

"Folks are sure to go and fall ill at the most untoward hour of the twenty-four," grumbled Master Cheese. "I was just looking for a good tea. I feel as empty as possible, after my short dinner. I wish—"

"Short dinner!" echoed Miss Deb in amazement, at least it would have been an amazement, but that she was accustomed to these little episodes from the young gentleman. "We had a beautiful piece of roast beef; and I'm sure you eat as much as you chose!"

"There was no pudding or pie," resentfully retorted Master Cheese. "I have felt all the afternoon just as if I should sink: and I couldn't get out to buy anything for myself, because Jan never came in, and the boy stopped out. I wish, Miss Deb, you'd give me a thick piece of bread-and-jam, as I have got to go off without my tea."

"The fact is, Master Cheese, you have the jam so often, in one way or another, that there's very little left. It will not last the season out."

"The green gooseberries 'll be coming on, Miss Deb," was Master Cheese's insinuating reply. "And there's always apples, you know. With plenty of lemon and a clove or two, apples make as good a pudding as anything else."

Miss Deb, always good natured, went to get him what he had asked for, and Master Cheese took his seat in front of the fire, and toasted his toes.

"There was a great mistake made when you were put to a surgeon," said Miss Amilly, laughing. "You should have gone apprentice to a pastrycook."

"She's a regular fidgetty old woman, that Miss Hautley," broke out Master Cheese with temper, passing over Miss Amilly's remark. "It's not two months yet that she has been at the Hall, and she has had one or the other of us up six times at least. I wonder what business she had to come to it? The Hall wouldn't have run away before Sir Edmund could get home."

Miss Deb came back with the bread-and-jam; a good thick slice, as the gentleman had requested. To look at him eating, one would think he had had nothing for a week. It disappeared in no time, and Master Cheese went out sucking his fingers and his lips. Deborah West picked up the work, and put things straight generally in the room. Then she sat down again, drawing her chair to the side of the fire.

"I do think that Cheese has got a wolf inside him," cried Amilly with a laugh.

"He is a great gourmand. He said this morning—" began Miss Deb, and then she stopped.

Finding what she was about to say thus brought to an abrupt conclusion, Amilly West looked at her sister. Miss Deb's attention was riveted on the room-door. Her mouth was open, her eyes seemed starting from her head with a fixed stare, and her countenance was turning white. Amilly turned her eyes hastily to the same direction, and saw a dark, obscure form filling up the door-way.

Not obscure for long. Amilly, more impulsive than her sister, rose up with a shriek, and then darted forward with outstretched arms of welcome. Deborah went forward stretching out hers.

"My dear father!"

It was no other than Dr. West. He gave them each a cool kiss, walked to the fire and sat down, bidding them not smother him. For some little while they could not over-get their surprise or believe their senses. They knew nothing of his intention to return, and had deemed him hundreds of miles away. Question after question they showered down upon him, the result of their amazement. He answered just as much as he chose. He had only come home for a day or so, he said, and did not care that it should be known he was there, to be tormented with a shoal of callers.

"Where's Mr. Jan?" asked he.

"In the surgery," said Deborah.

"Is he by himself?"

"Yes, dear papa. Master Cheese has just gone up to Deerham Hall, and the boy is out."

Dr. West rose, and made his way to the surgery. The surgery was empty. But the light of a fire from the half-opened door, led him to Jan's bed-room. It was a room that would persist in remaining obstinately damp, and Jan, albeit not over careful of himself, judged it well to have an occasional fire lighted. The room, seen by this light, looked comfortable. The small, low, iron bed stood in the far corner: in the opposite corner, the bureau, as it had in Dr. West's time, the door opening to the garden (never used now) between them, at the end of the room. The window was on the side opposite the fire, a table in the middle. Jan was then occupied in stirring the fire into a blaze, and its cheerful light flickered on every part of the room.

"Good-evening, Mr. Jan."

Jan turned round, poker in hand, and stared amiably.

"Law!" cried he. "Who'd have thought it?"

The old word; the word he had learnt at school—law. It was Jan's favorite mode of expressing surprise still, and Lady Verner never could break him of it. He shook hands cordially with Dr. West.

The doctor shut the door, slipping the bolt, and sat down to the fire. Jan cleared a space on the table, which was covered with jars and glass vases, cylinders, and other apparatus, seemingly for chemical purposes, and took his seat there.

The doctor had taken a run home, "making a morning call, as it might be metaphorically observed," he said to Jan. Just to have a sight of home faces, and hear a little home news. Would Mr. Jan recite to him somewhat of the latter?

Jan did so: touching upon all he could recollect. From John Massingbird's return to Verner's Pride, and the consequent turning out of Mr. Verner and his wife, down to the death of Sir Rufus Hautley: not forgetting the pranks played by the "ghost," and the foiled expedition of Mrs. Peckaby to New Jerusalem. Some of these items of intelligence the doctor had heard before, for Jan periodically wrote to him. The doctor looked taller, and stouter, and redder than ever, and as he leaned thoughtfully forward, and the crimson blaze played upon his face, Jan thought how like he was growing to his sister, the late Mrs. Verner.

"Mr. Jan," said the doctor, "it is not right that my nephew, John Massingbird, should enjoy Verner's Pride."

"Of course it's not," answered Jan. "Only things don't go by rights always, you know. It's but seldom they do."

"He ought to give it up to Mr. Verner."

"So I told him," said Jan. "*I* should, in his place."

"What did he say?"

"Say? Laughed at me, and called me green."

Dr. West sat thoughtfully pulling his great dark whiskers. Dark as they were, they had yet a tinge of red in the fire-light.

"It was a curious thing; a very curious thing, that both brothers should die, as was supposed, in Australia," said he. "Better—as things have turned out—that Fred should have turned up afterwards, than John."

"I don't know that," spoke Jan, with his accustomed truth telling freedom. "The pair were not good for much, but John was the best of them."

"I was thinking of Sibylla," candidly admitted the doctor. "It would have been better for her."

Jan opened his eyes considerably.

"Better for her!—for it to turn out that she had two husbands living? That's logic, that is."

"Dear me, to be sure!" cried the doctor. "I was not thinking of that phase of the affair, Mr. Jan. Is she in spirits?"

"Who? Sibylla? She's fretting herself into her grave."

Dr. West turned his head with a start.

"What at? The loss of Verner's Pride?"

"Well, I don't know," said Jan, ever plain spoken. "She puzzles me. When she was at Verner's Pride, she never seemed satisfied: she was perpetually hankering after excitement and didn't seem to care for Lionel or for anybody else, and kept the house full of people from top to bottom. She has a restless, dissatisfied temper, and it keeps her on the worry. Folks with such tempers know no peace, and let nobody else know any, that's about them. A nice life she leads Lionel! Not that he'd drop a hint of it. He'd cut out his tongue before he'd speak a word against his wife: he'd rather make her out to be an angel."

"Are they pretty comfortably off for money?" inquired Dr. West, after a pause. "I suppose Mr. Verner must have managed to feather his nest a little, before leaving?"

"Not a bit of it," returned Jan. "He was over head and ears in debt. Sibylla helped him to a good portion of it. She went the pace. John Massingbird waives the question of the mesne profits, or Lionel would be in worse embarrassment than he is."

Dr. West looked crestfallen.

"What do they live on?" he asked. "Does Lady Verner keep them? She can't have too much for herself now."

"Oh! it's managed somehow," said Jan.

Dr. West sat for some time in ruminating silence, pulling his whiskers as before, running his hands through his hair, the large clear blue sapphire ring, which he always wore on his finger conspicuous. Jan swayed his legs about, and waited to afford any further information. Presently the doctor turned to him a charming expression of open confidence on his countenance.

"Mr. Jan, I am in great hopes that you will do me a little favor. I have temporary need for a trifle of pecuniary aid—some slight debts which have grown upon me abroad," he added, carelessly, with a short cough—"and, knowing your good heart, I have resolved to apply to you. If you can oblige me with a couple of hundred pounds or so, I'll give you my acknowledgment, and return it punctually as soon as I am able."

"I'd let you have it with all the pleasure in life, if I had got it," heartily replied Jan. "But I have not."

"My dear Mr. Jan! Not got it! You must have quite a nice little nest of savings laid by in the bank, surely! I know you never spend a shilling on yourself."

"All I had in the bank and what I have drawn since has been handed over to my mother. I wanted Lionel and Sibylla to come here: I and Miss Deb arranged it all; and in that case I should have given the money to Miss Deb. But Sibylla refused: she would not come here, she would not go anywhere but to Lady Verner's. So I handed the money to my mother."

The confession appeared to put the doctor out considerably.

"How very imprudent, Mr. Jan! To give away all you possessed, leaving nothing for yourself! I never heard of such a thing!"

"Lionel and his wife were turned out of everything, and had nobody to look to. I don't see that I could have put the money to better use," stoutly returned Jan. "It was not much. There's such a lot of the Clay Lane folks always wanting things when they are ill. And Miss Deb, she had had a little. You keep her so short, doctor."

"But you pay her the sum that was agreed upon for housekeeping!" said Dr. West.

"What should hinder me?" returned Jan. "She can't make both ends meet, she says, and then she has to come to me. *I'm* willing: only I can't give money away and put it by, you see."

Dr. West probably did see it. He saw, beyond doubt, that all hope of ready money from easy Jan was gone—from the simple fact that Jan's coffers were just now empty. The fact did not afford him satisfaction.

"I'll tell you what, Mr. Jan," said he, brightening up, "you shall give me your signature to a little bill—a bill at two months, let us say. It will be the same as money."

"Can't," said Jan.

"You *can't*!" replied Dr. West.

"No!" said Jan, resolutely. "I'd give away all I had in hand to give, and welcome; but I'd never sign bills. A doctor has no business with 'em. Don't you remember what they did for Jones at Bartholomew's?"

"I don't remember Jones at Bartholomew's," frigidly returned the doctor.

"No! Why, what's gone with your memory?" innocently asked Jan. "If you think a bit, you'll recollect about him, and what his end was. Bills did it; the signing of bills to oblige some friend. I'll never sign a bill, doctor. I wouldn't do it for my own mother."

Thus the doctor's expectations were put a final end to, so far as Jan went—and very certain expectations they had, no doubt, been. As to Jan, a thought may have crossed him that the doctor and his daughter Sibylla appeared to have the same propensity for getting out of money. Dr. West recovered his equanimity, and magnanimously waived away the affair as a trifle not worth dwelling on.

"How does Cheese get on?" he asked.

"First-rate—in the eating line," replied Jan.

"Have you got him out of his idleness yet?"

"It would take a cleverer man than I to do that, doctor. It's constitutional. When he goes up to London, in the autumn, I shall take an assistant, unless you should be coming home yourself."

"I have no intention of it at present, Mr. Jan. Am I to understand you that Sibylla has serious symptoms of disease?"

"There's no doubt of it," said Jan. "You always prophesied it for her, you know. When she was at Verner's Pride she was continually ailing: not a week passed but I was called to attend her. She was so imprudent, too—she *would* be. Going out and getting her feet wet; sitting up half the night. We tried to bring her to reason; but it was of no use. She defied Lionel; she would not listen to me—as good speak to a post."

"Why should she defy her husband? Are they on bad terms?"

"They are on as good terms as any man and wife could ever be, Sibylla being the wife," was Jan's rejoinder. "You know something of her temper and disposition, doctor—it is of no use to mince matters—you remember how it had used to be with her here at home. Lionel's a husband in a thousand. How he can possibly put up with her, and be always patient and kind, puzzles me more than any problem ever did in Euclid. If Fred had lived—why, he'd have broken her spirit or her heart, long before this."

Dr. West rose and stretched himself. The failings of Sibylla were not a pleasant topic, thus openly spoken of by Jan, but none knew better than the doctor how true were the grounds on which he spoke. None knew better, either, that disease for her was to be feared.

"Her sisters went off about this age, or a little later," he said musingly. "I could not save them."

"And Sibylla's as surely going after them, doctor, as that I am here," returned Jan. "Lionel intends to call in Dr. Hayes to her."

"Since when has she been so ill?"

"Not since any time in particular. There appears to be no real illness yet: only symptoms. She coughs, and gets as thin as a skeleton. Sometimes I think if she could keep up a cheerful temper, she'd keep well. You will see what you think of her."

The doctor walked towards the bureau at the far corner.

"Have you ever opened it, Mr. Jan?"

"It's not likely," said Jan. "Didn't you tell me not to? Your own papers are in it, and you hold the key."

"It's not inconvenient to your room, my retaining it, is it?" asked the doctor. "I don't know where else I should put my papers."

"Not a bit of it," said Jan. "Have another in here as well, if you like. It's safe here."

"Do you know, Mr. Jan, I feel as if I'd rather sleep in your little bed to-night than indoors," said the doctor, looking at Jan's bed. "The room seems like an old friend to me: I feel at home in it."

"Sleep in it, if you like," returned Jan, in his easy good-nature. "Miss Deb can put me into some room or other. I say, doctor, it's past tea-time. Wouldn't you like some refreshment?"

"I had a good dinner on my road," replied Dr. West: which Jan might have guessed, for Dr. West was quite sure to take care of himself. "We will go in, if you like; Deb and Amilly will wonder what has become of me. How old they begin to look!"

"I don't suppose any of us look younger," answered Jan.

They went into the house. Deborah and Amilly were in a flutter of hospitality, lading the tea-table with good things that it would have gladdened Master Cheese's heart to see. They had been up-stairs to smooth out their curls, to put on clean, white sleeves and collars, a gold chain and such-like little additions, setting themselves off as they were now setting off the tea-table, all in their affectionate welcome to their father. And Dr. West who liked eating as well as ever did Master Cheese, surveyed the table with complacency as he sat down to it, ignoring the dinner he had spoken of to Jan. Amilly sat by him, heaping his plate with what he liked best, and Deborah made the tea.

"I have been observing to Mr. Jan that you are beginning to look very old, Deb," remarked the doctor. "Amilly also."

It was a cruel shaft. A bitter return for their loving welcome. Perhaps they *were* looking older, but he need not have said it so point blank, and before Jan. They turned crimson, poor ladies, and bent to sip their tea, and tried to turn the words off with a laugh, and did not know where to look. In true innate delicacy of feeling, Dr. West and his daughter, Sibylla, rivalled each other.

The meal over, the doctor proposed to pay a visit to Deerham Court, and did so, Jan walking with him, first of all mentioning to Deborah the wish expressed by Dr. West as to occupying Jan's room for the night, that she might see the arrangement carried out.

Which she did. And Jan, at the retiring hour—though this is a little anticipating, for the evening is not yet over—escorted the doctor to the door of the room, and wished him a good night's rest, never imagining but what he enjoyed one. But had fire, or any other accident, burst open the room to public gaze in the lone night hours, Dr. West would have been seen at work, instead of asleep. Every drawer of the bureau was out, every paper it contained was misplaced. The doctor was evidently searching for something, as seduously as he had once searched for that lost prescription, which at the time appeared so much to disturb his peace.

CHAPTER LII.

AN EVENING AT LADY VERNER'S.

In the well-lighted drawing-room at Deerham Court was its mistress, Lady Verner. Seated with her on the same sofa was her son, Lionel. Decima, at a little distance, was standing, talking to Lord Garle, Lucy Tempest sat at the table, cutting the leaves of a new book, and Sibylla was bending over the fire in a shivering attitude, as if she could not get enough of its heat. Lord Garle had been dining with them.

The door opened, and Jan entered.

"I have brought you a visitor, Sibylla," said he, in his unceremonious fashion, without any sort of greeting to anybody. "Come in, doctor."

It caused quite a confusion, the entrance of Dr. West. All were surprised. Lionel rose, Lucy rose; Lord Garle and Decima came forward, and Sibylla sprung towards him with a cry. Lady Verner was the only one who retained entire calmness.

"Papa! it cannot be you! When did you come?"

Dr. West kissed her, and turned to Lady Verner with some courtly words. Dr. West was an adept at such. Not the courtly words that spring genuinely from a kindly and refined nature; but those that are put on to hide a false one. All people, true-hearted ones, too, cannot distinguish between them; the false and the real. Next, the doctor grasped the hand of Lionel.

"My son-in-law!" he exclaimed, in a very demonstrative manner. "The last time you and I had the pleasure of meeting, Mr. Verner, we little anticipated that such a relationship would ensue. I rejoice to welcome you in it, my dear sir."

"True," said Lionel, with a quiet smile. "Coming events do not always cast their shadows before."

With Decima, with Lord Garle, with Lucy Tempest, the doctor severally shook hands; he had a phrase of suavity for all.

"I should not have known you," he said to the latter.

"No!" returned Lucy. "Why?"

"You have grown, Miss Tempest. Grown much."

"Then I must have been very short before," said Lucy. "I am not tall now."

"You have grown into remarkable beauty," added the doctor.

Whether Lucy had grown into beauty or not, she did not like being told of it. And she did not like Dr. West. She had not been in love with him ever, as you may recollect; but she seemed to like him now, as he stood before her, less and less. Drawing away from him when she could do so civilly, she went up and talked to Jan.

A little while, and they had become more settled, dispersing into groups. The doctor, his daughter, and Lionel were sitting on a couch apart, conversing in an under tone; the rest disposed themselves as they would. Dr. West had accepted a cup of coffee. He kept it in his hand, sipping it now and then, and slowly eat a biscuit.

"Mr. Jan tells me Sibylla is not very strong," he observed, addressing both of them, but more particularly Lionel.

"Not very," replied Lionel. "The cold weather of this winter has tried her; has given her a cough. She will be better, I hope, when it comes in warm."

"How do you feel, my dear?" inquired the doctor, apparently looking at his coffee-cup instead of Sibylla. "Weak here?"—touching his chest.

"Not more weak than I had used to be," she answered, in a cross tone, as if the confession that she did feel weak was not pleasant to her. "There's nothing the matter with me, papa; only Lionel makes a fuss."

"Nay, Sibylla," interposed Lionel, good-humoredly, "I leave that to you and Jan."

"You would like to make papa believe you do not make a fuss!" she cried, in a most resentful tone. "When you know, not two days ago, you wanted to prevent my going to the party at Mrs. Bitterworth's!"

"I plead guilty to that," said Lionel. "It was most inclement night, a cold, raw fog that penetrated everywhere, carriages and else, and I wished you not to venture out in it. To doing so increased your cough."

"Mr. Verner was right," said Dr. West. "Fogs are pernicious to a degree, where the chest and lungs are delicate. You should not stir out of the house, Sibylla, after sunset. Now don't interrupt, my dear. Let the carriage be ever so closely shut, it makes no difference. There is the change of atmosphere in the warm room to the cold carriage; there are the draughts of air in passing to it. You must not do it, Sibylla."

"Do you mean to say, papa, that I am to live like a hermit?—never to go out?" she returned, her bosom heaving with vexation. "It is not much visiting that I have had, goodness knows, since quitting Verner's Pride; if I am to give it all up, you may as well put me out of the world. As good be dead!"

"Sibylla," said the doctor, more impressively than he often spoke, "I know your constitution, and I know pretty well what you can and what you cannot bear. Don't attempt to go out after sunset again. Should you get stronger it will be a different matter. At present you must not be. Will you remember this, Mr. Verner?"

"If my wife will allow me to remember it," he said, bending to Sibylla with a kindly tone. "My wife was good to keep her in all this winter; she would not be kept."

"What has Jan been telling you about me, papa? It a shame of him! I am not ill."

"Mr. Jan told me very little indeed of your ailments," replied Dr. West. "He says you are not strong; he says you are fretful, irritable. My dear, this arises from your state of health."

"I have thought so, too," said Lionel, speaking impulsively. Many and many a time, latterly, when she had nearly tried out his heart and his patience, had he been willing to find an excuse for her still—that her illness of body could in her the irritation of mind. Or, at any rate, greatly increased it.

An eye, far less experienced than that of Dr. West—who, whatever may have been his other shortcomings, was clever in his profession—could be seen at a glance how weak Sibylla was. She wore an evening dress of white muslin, its body very low, its sleeves very short; her chest was painfully thin, and every breath she took lifted it ominously: she seemed to be breathing outside as well as in. The doctor touched the muslin.

"This is not a fit dress for you, Sibylla.—It—"

"Lionel has been putting you up to say it, papa!" she burst forth.

Dr. West looked at her. He surmised what was indeed the fact, that her husband had remonstrated against the unsuitableness of the attire to one in her condition.

"You have heard every word Mr. Verner has spoken to me, Sibylla. You should be wrapped up warmly also: to be exposed like this is enough to—to give your death" he was about to say, but changed the words—"make you very ill."

"Decima and Lucy Tempest dress so," she returned in a tone that threatened tears.

Dr. West lifted his eyes where Decima and Lucy were standing with Lord Garle.—Decima wore a silk dress; Lucy a white one: each made evening fashion.

"They are both healthy," he said, "and may wear what they please. Look at their necks, compared to yours, Sibylla. I shall ask Mr. Verner to put all these thin, low bodies behind the fire."

"He would only have the pleasure of paying for others to replace them," was the undutiful rejoinder. "Papa, I have enough trouble without your turning against me."

Turning against her! Dr. West did not point out how purposeless were her words. His intention was to come in in the morning, and talk to her seriously of her state of health, and the precautions it was necessary to observe. He took a sip of his coffee, and turned to Lionel.

"I was about to ask you a superfluous question, Mr. Verner—whether that lost codicil has been heard of. But your leaving Verner's Pride is an answer."

"It has never been heard of," replied Lionel. "When John Massingbird returned and put in his claim—when he took possession, I may say, for the one was coeval with the other—the wanting of the codicil was indeed a grievance: far more than it had appeared at the time of its loss."

"You must regret it much."

"I regret it always," he answered. "I regret it bitterly for Sibylla's sake."

"Papa," she cried in deep emotion, her cheeks becoming crimson, her blue eyes flashing with an unnatural light, "if that codicil could be found, it would save my life. Jan, in his rough, stupid way, tells me I am fretting myself into my grave. Perhaps I am. I want to go back to Verner's Pride."

It was not pleasant to converse on; it was a subject utterly hopeless—and Dr. West sought one more genial. Ranging his eyes over the room, they fell upon Lord Garle, who was still talking with Decima and Lucy.

"Which of the two young ladies makes the viscount's attraction, Mr. Verner?"

Lionel smiled. "They do not take me into their confidence, sir; any one of the three."

"I am sure it is not Decima, papa," spoke up Sibylla. "She's as cold as a stone. I won't answer for its not being Lucy Tempest. Lord Garle comes here a good deal, and he and Lucy seem great friends. I often think he comes for Lucy."

"Then there's little doubt upon the point," observed the doctor, coming to a more rapid conclusion than the words really warranted. "Time was, Mr. Verner, when I thought that young lady would have been your wife."

"Who?" asked Lionel. But that he only asked the question in his confusion, without need, was evident: the tell-tale flush betrayed it. His pale face had turned red, to the very roots of his hair.

"In those old days when you were ill, lying here, and Miss Tempest was so much with you, I fancied I saw the signs of a mutual attachment," continued the doctor. "I conclude I must have been mistaken."

"Little doubt of that, doctor," lightly answered Lionel, recovering his equanimity, though he could not yet recover his disturbed complexion, and laughing as he spoke.

Sibylla's greedy ears had drunk up the words, her sharp eyes had caught the conscious flush, and her jealous heart was making the most of it. At that unfortunate moment, as ill-luck had it, Lucy brought up the basket of cakes and held it out to Dr. West. Lionel rose to take it from her.

"I was taking your name in vain, Miss Tempest," said the complacent doctor. "Did you hear me?"

"No," replied Lucy, smiling. "What about?"

"I was telling Mr. Verner that in the old days I had deemed his choice was falling upon another, rather than my daughter. Do you remember, young lady?—in that long illness of his?"

Lucy did remember. And the remembrance, thus called suddenly before her, the words themselves, the presence of Lionel, all brought to her far more emotion than had arisen to him. Her throat heaved, as with a spasm, and the startled color dyed her face. Lionel saw it. Sibylla saw it.

"It proves to us how we may be mistaken, Miss Tempest," observed the doctor, who from that habit of his, already hinted at, the never looking people in the face when he spoke to them, had failed to observe anything. "I hear there is a probability of this fair hand being appropriated by another: one who can enhance his value by coupling it with a coronet."

"Don't take the trouble, Lucy. I am holding it."

It was Lionel who spoke. In her confusion she had not loosed the cake-basket, although he had taken it. Quietly, impassively, in the most unruffled manner spoke he, smiling carelessly. Only for a moment had his self-control been shaken. "Will you take a biscuit, Dr. West?" he asked.

"Lucy, my dear, will you step here to me?"

The request came from the other end of the room, from Lady Verner. Lionel, who was about to place the cake basket on the table, stopped and held out his arm to Lucy, to conduct her to his mother. They went forward, utterly unconscious that Sibylla was casting angry and jealous glances to them; conscious only that those sacred feelings in either heart, so well hid from the world, had been stirred to their very depths.

The door opened, and one of the servants entered. "Mr. Jan is wanted."

"Who's taken ill now, I wonder?" cried Jan, descending from the arm of his mother's sofa, where he had been perched.

In the ante-room was Master Cheese, looking rueful.

"There's a message come from Squire Pidcock's," cried he, in a most resentful tone.—"Somebody's to attend immediately. Am I to go?"

"I suppose you'd faint at having to go after being up to Miss Hautley's," returned Jan. "You'd never survive the two, should you?"

"Well, you know, Jan, it's a good mile and a half to Pidcock's, and I had to go to the other place without my tea," remonstrated Master Cheese.

"I dare say Miss Deb has given you your tea since you came home."

"But it's not like having it at the usual hour. And I couldn't finish it in comfort when this message came."

"Be off back and finish it now, then," said Jan. And the young gentleman departed with alacrity.

Returning to the drawing room, Jan told them that he was called out. Lionel had resumed his seat then by Sibylla and Dr. West. Jan departed, and later in the evening, as he did not return, Lionel walked home with the doctor.

"What do you think of Sibylla?" was his first question, before they had well quitted the gates.

"My opinion is not a favorable one, so far as I can judge at present," replied Dr. West. "She is not to be crossed, Mr. Verner."

"Heaven is my witness that she is not crossed by me, Dr. West," was the reply of Lionel, given more earnestly than the occasion seemed to call for. "From the hour I married her, my whole life has been spent in striving to shield her from crosses, so far as lies in the power of man; to cherish her in all care and tenderness. There are few husbands would bear with her—her peculiarities—as I have borne: as I will still bear. I say this to you, her father; I would say it to no one else. My chief regret, at the wrenching from me of Verner's Pride, is for Sibylla's sake."

"My dear sir, I honestly believe you. I know what Sibylla was at home, fretful, wayward, and restless; and those tendencies are not likely to be lessened, now disease has shown itself. I always feared it was in her constitution; that, in spite of all our care, she would follow her sisters. They fell off and died, you may remember, when they seemed most blooming. People talked freely—as I understood at the time—about my allowing her so suddenly to marry Frederick Massingbird; but my course was dictated by one sole motive—that it would give her the benefit of a sea voyage, which might prove invaluable to her constitution."

Lionel believed just as much of this as he liked. Dr. West was his wife's father, and, as such, he deferred to him. He remembered what had been told him by Sibylla; and he remembered the promise he had given her.

"It's a shocking pity that you are turned from Verner's Pride!" resumed the doctor.

"It is. But there's no help for it."

"Does Sibylla grieve after it *very* much? Has it any real effect, think you, upon her health?—as she seemed to intimate."

"She grieves, no doubt. She *keeps up* the grief, if you can understand it, Dr. West. Not a day passes, but she breaks into lamentations over the loss, complaining loudly and bitterly. Whether her health would not equally have failed at Verner's Pride, I am unable to say. I think it would."

"John Massingbird, under the circumstances, ought to give it up to you. It is *rightfully* yours. Sibylla's life—and she is his own cousin—may depend upon it: he ought not to keep it. But for the loss of the codicil, he would never have come to it."

"Of course he could not," assented Lionel. "It is that loss which has upset everything."

Dr. West fell into silence, and continued in it until his house was in view. Then he spoke again.

"What will you undertake to give me, Mr. Verner, if I can bring John Massingbird to hear reason, and re-establish you at Verner's Pride?"

"Not anything," answered Lionel. "Verner's Pride is John Massingbird's according to the law; therefore it cannot be mine. Neither would he resign it."

"I wonder whether it could be done by stratagem?" mused Dr. West. "Could we persuade him that the codicil has turned up? or something of that? It would be very desirable for Sibylla."

"If I go back to Verner's Pride at all, sir, I go back by *right*; neither by purchase nor by stratagem," was the reply of Lionel. "Rely upon it, things set about in an underhand manner never prosper."

"I might get John Massingbird to give it up to you," continued the doctor, nodding his head thoughtfully, as if he had some scheme afloat in it. "I might get him to resign it to you, rents, and residence and all, and betake himself off. You would give me a per centage?"

"Were John Massingbird to offer such to me to-morrow, of his own free will, I should decline it," forcibly returned Lionel. "I have suffered too much from Verner's Pride ever to take possession of it again, except by indisputable right—a right in which I cannot be disturbed. Twice have I been turned from it, you know, sir. And the turning out has cost me more than the world deemed."

"But surely you would go back to it if you could, for Sibylla's sake?"

"Were I a rich man, able to rent Verner's Pride from John Massingbird, I might ask him to let it me, if it would gratify Sibylla. But, to return there as its master, on sufferance, liable to be expelled again at any moment—never! John Massingbird holds the right to Verner's Pride, and he will exercise it, for me."

"Then you will not accept my offer—to try and get you back again; and to make me a substantial honorarium if I do it?"

"I do not understand you, Dr. West. The question cannot arise."

"If I make it arise; and carry it out?"

"I beg your pardon—No."

It was an emphatic denial, and Dr. West may have felt himself foiled, as he had been foiled by Jan's confession of empty pockets, earlier in the evening.

"Nevertheless," observed he equably, as he took hands with Lionel, before entering his own house, "I shall see John Massingbird before I sleep, and urge the hardship of the case upon him."

"You

It was probably with that view that Dr. West proceeded early on the following morning to Verner's Pride, after his night of search, instead of sleep, astonishing John Massingbird not a little. That gentleman was enjoying himself in a comfortable sort of way in his bedroom. A substantial breakfast was laid out on a table by the bed-side, while he, not risen, smoked a pipe as he lay by way of whetting his appetite. Dr. West entered without ceremony.

"My stars!" uttered John, when he could believe his eyes. "It's never you, Uncle West! Did you drop from a balloon?"

Dr. West explained. That he had come over for a few hours' sojourn. The state of his dear daughter Sibylla was giving him considerable uneasiness, and he had just put himself to the expense and inconvenience of a journey to see her, and judge of her state himself.

That there were a few trifling inaccuracies in this statement, inasmuch as that his daughter's state had had nothing to do with the doctor's journey, was of little consequence. It was all one to John Massingbird. He made a hasty toilette and invited the doctor to take some breakfast.

Dr. West was nothing loth. He had breakfasted at home; but a breakfast, or any other meal, more or less, was nothing to Dr. West. He sat down to the table, and took a choice morsel of boned chicken on his plate.

"John, I have come up to talk to you about Verner's Pride."

"What about it?" asked John, speaking with his mouth full of devilled kidneys.

"The place is Lionel Verner's."

"How d'ye make out that?" asked John.

"That codicil revoked the will, which left the estate to you. It gave it to him."

"But the codicil vanished," answered John.

"True. I was present at the consternation it excited. It disappeared in some unaccountably mysterious way; but there's no doubt that Mr. Verner died, believing the estate would go in its direct line—to Lionel. In fact, I know he did. Therefore you ought to act as though the codicil were in existence and resign the estate to Lionel."

The recommendation excessively tickled the fancy of John Massingbird. It set him laughing for five minutes.

"In short you never ought to have attempted to enter upon it," continued Dr. West. "Will you resign it to him?"

"Uncle West, you'll kill me with laughter, if you joke like that," was the reply.

"I have little doubt that the codicil is still in existence," urged Dr. West. "I remember, my impression at the time was, that it was only mislaid, temporarily lost. If that codicil turned up, you would be obliged to quit."

"So I should," said John, with equanimity. "Let Lionel Verner produce it, and I vacate the next hour. *That* will never turn up: don't you fret yourself, Uncle We."

"Will you not resign it to him?"

"No, that I won't. Verner's Pride mine by law. I should be a simpleton to give it up."

"Sibylla's pining for it," resumed the doctor, trying what a little pathetic coaxing would do. "She will as surely di unless she can come back to Verner's Pride as that you and I are at breakfast here."

"If you ask my opinion, Uncle West, I should say that she'd die, any way. he looks like it. She's fading away just same other two did. But she won't die a day sooner for being away from Verner's Pride and she would not have lived an hour long, had she remained in it. That's my belief.

"Verner's Pride never was intended for you, John," cried the Doctor. "ome freak caused Mr. Verner to will it awayfrom Lionel; but he came to his senses bere he died, and repaired the injury."

"Then I am so much the mo obliged to the freak," was the good-humed, but uncompromising rejoinder of Johnfassingbird.

And, more than that, Dr. Wt could not make of him. John was eviden determined to stand by Verner's Pride. T doctor then changed his tactics, and tried ttle business on his own account—that of rowing from John Massingbird as much oney as that gentleman would lend.

It was not much. John, his laughing way, protested he was alwa cleaned out." Nobody knew but himself- it he did not mind hinting it to Uncle W,—the heaps of money he had been oblig to "shell out" before he could repose in tquillity at Verner's Pride. There were b entanglements and present expenses. N speak of sums spent in benevolence. Ben lence? the doctor exclaimed. Yes, ben lence, John replied with a semi-grave f he had had to give away an unlimite mount of banknotes to the neighborhoo as a recompense for having terrified it is its. There were times when he thought should have to come upon Lionel Ve for the mesne profits, he observed. Procedure which he was unwilling to resor for two reasons: the one was, that Lion ssessed nothing to pay them with; the er that he, John, never liked to be hard

So the doctor had to ntent himself with a very trifling loan, c ared with the sum he had fondly anticip. He dropped some obscure hints that th idence he could give, if he chose, with ref ce to the codicil, or rather what he knew have been Mr. Verner's intentions, mig go far to deprive his nephew John of the tate. But his nephew only laughed at h and could not by any manner of means b duced to treat the hints as serious. A will is a will, he said, and Verner's Pride was disputably his.

Altogether, taking one thing with another, Dr. West's visit to Deerham had not been quite so satisfactory as he had anticipated it might be made. fter quitting John Massingbird, he went Deerham Court and remained a few ho with Sibylla. The rest of the day he dipd between his daughters in their sitting-ro and Jan in the surgery, taking his depa again from Deerham by the night train.

And Debor nd Amilly, drowned in tears, said his visit could be compared only to the flush of a comet's tail: no sooner seen than gone again. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

CHRISTMAS LONG AGO.

A PLAINTIVE AND COMPLAINTIVE DITTY, SUPPOSED TO BE SUNG BY GRANDMAMMA OLDDAY, AGED 75.

Since then, my dears, ye'll have me sing,
I'll try what I can do,
And back old recollections bring,
Thus to recount to you,
What glorious days those were when I
Wore frock and furbelow;
When Christmas time was in its prime,
Long, long ago.

No treacherous robe old Christmas wore,
Of sunshine fringed with mist:
The lakes and ponds were frozen o'er,
And shoes were shod with list;
The pathways as you trudged along
Were ankle-deep in snow,
When Christmas time was in its prime,
Long, long ago.

No noisome railways then had we
The country to deface;
Our four-horse coach, a treat to see,
Went dashing through the place;
By which from town, just once a year,
Came brothers Ned and Joe,
When Christmas time was in its prime,
Long, long ago.

That horrid gas, which flares and throbs,
Was not in houses thrust;
Nor stuck-up stoves ashamed of hobs,
And half afraid of dust;
Bright was the flame from wax or oil,
Hearths gave a genial glow,
When Christmas time was in its prime,
Long, long ago.

Books then were books; a Christmas gift
You scarce could carry home;
So large to span, so hard to lift—
A real substantial tome.
No phantom leaves in flaring boards,
Designed for merest show,
When Christmas time was in its prime,
Long, long ago.

At table, think you, you could see
Disguised and tortured meat?
Making one ask its history,
With names one can't repeat.
Good beef and mutton, pork and veal,
Ranged then in honest row,
When Christmas time was in its prime,
Long, long ago.

On Christmas-day, the dinner-hour
T'wards night we did not fix;
Twelve was the time, or pa looked sour—
None of your half-past six.
Then joined we all in "Blindman's Bluff,"
Or would the slipper throw;
When Christmas time was in its prime,
Long, long ago.

Ah, fun, it then was fun indeed!
Not furious, nor fast;
But mirth that moved with decorous speed,
And warranted to last;
No whirling waltz, no polka hop,
But measures grave and slow;
When Christmas time was in its prime,
Long, long ago.

The women then were passing fair,
Nor steel nor whalebone wore;
A plain black fillet bound their hair,
Neat aprons hung before.
Tippets disposed in ample form,
And caps as white as snow;
When Christmas time was in its prime,
Long, long ago.

As for the men—or dark or fair—
Appeared they Christian-wise;
Not covered o'er with nasty hair,
Nor dressed like foreign guys.
Smooth, then, and gentle the salute,
Beneath the mistletoe,
When Christmas time was in its prime,
Long, long ago.

But, bless me! how I'm running on;
'Tis time I made an end;
There's no one now but Uncle John
To old long songs a friend.
Should you, my dears, live to my years,
'Twill be your turn to know
The difference 'twixt Christmas now
And long, long ago!

RICH COLORS.—An English writer, in some remarks on "A Lady's Dress," gives the following excellent hints on the effect of color:

"We dearly love and duly appreciate color; we have hailed with delight the resumption of the scarlet cloak this winter by our fair countrywomen, especially at a time of public mourning, when our streets have worn so monotonous and sombre an aspect. The eye has been gladdened and refreshed by the warm, bright red, set off by the black dress beneath; and the welcome effect it produced proved to our minds how much pleasure we insensibly derive from the presence of color. We are hardly aware of it until we lose it. The aspect of our crowded thoroughfares lately enables us to form some idea of what we should feel if, by some freak of fashion, the fair sex were to adopt a costume as unvaried and hideous as the present masculine attire, and if our shops, that now display all that is lovely in color and exquisite in design, had nothing more attractive to offer than broadcloth or black stuff, we should feel depressed. The eye needs the stimulant of color and variety to keep it from fatigue; and beneath our gray and colorless sky we want more color, not less. Some thirteen or fourteen years ago color was certainly at a discount in dress as well as in architecture and decoration. That there has been a revival in its favor no one will deny."

☞ In a church not quite a hundred miles from Lynn, a person entered a pew, and believing he had a good seat, unfortunately sat down upon the dress of a lady who happened to be rather slightly crinolined. In an instant he rose to his feet and begged the lady's pardon in these words: "Your pardon, mem, but I'm feared I've broken your lower ribbons." "Nothing wrong," said the lady, blushing.

☞ Don't take too much interest in the affairs of your neighbors. Six per cent. will do.

THE OLD MAN BENJAMIN HUMPHREYS

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

"Another Christmas," muttered to himself, in a dreary, dissatisfied tone, Benjamin Humphreys, the senior partner of one of the heaviest commercial houses in the great city where he had built up, day by day, year by year, his large fortune. "For my part, I don't think much of these holidays. Miserable waste of time and money usually, always make some breaks in the business, and set some screw loose. Dull, foolish, expensive, of no use to anybody. I'm glad enough when they are over, and one is able to settle down to work again."

It was a large, lofty room, in which these words were spoken, with heavy, luxurious furniture, for Benjamin Humphreys liked to gather about him tangible evidences of the wealth which he had heaped up. He was an old man now; a widower, and childless; a man into whose life the lust and the greed of gold had entered, and eaten out and rusted away all sweet and tender sympathies, all faith, freshness, aspiration, and soured and hardened and stunted his nature, until it was like a rock, down which there was no laugh of sweet flowing waters, in whose crevices no small flower slowly opened and filled the air with its faint perfume; a hard, cold, arid nature, as everybody knew, when they looked into his face, was that of the rich, old man Benjamin Humphreys.

Fifty years before he had come to the city to make his fortune. The country youth had the genius of business. Shrewd, prompt, untiring, he had risen steadily from one position to another, until he was now senior partner in the firm which he had entered as under clerk.

His wife had died in her youth, and her child soon followed her; and since then the merchant had devoted his life to one work and one purpose, and this was *making money*.

It was a beautiful Christmas morning. The winter sunbeams rained down their golden greeting over the earth, and brightened its withered face with that old language, "Good will to men," which they wrote when the angels once sang.

And everywhere hearts were glad—everywhere the Christmas greeting was heard dropping in high homes and lowly from loving voices, budding like white petals on the lips of little children, skipping like a caress along the touch of fathers and mothers everywhere, but in the home which stood lonely in its desolate grandeur, the home of Benjamin Humphreys.

The housemaid came in to the parlor to throw up the windows, and let in for a few minutes the fresh morning air and the rain of sunbeams, and because he had nothing better to do, and felt somehow oppressed and uneasy this morning; the master of the house walked to the window and looked out.

He stood there a tall, thin figure, bowed somewhat by his years, the iron-gray hair matching the iron gray eyebrows; the cold, keen eyes gleaming out from under them, and the lines in the sharp, stern face brought out clear in the sunshine.

"What a fine residence!" exclaimed a gentleman who was passing at that moment to his friend. "Solid and substantial, too. I like the looks of it."

The words were spoken right under the window where the owner stood, shielded by the curtain. They gratified the old man, for his house was a substantial witness of the wealth on which he prided himself. He bent forward eagerly to harken.

"Yes," answered the voice of a neighbor, whom the listener recognized. "But you nor I would exchange places with its owner, neither for his splendid home nor all his money. He's a lonely, friendless, rich old man—when you've said all. Why, I don't believe there's a voice in the world that will wish him merry Christmas this day!"

The steps passed on, the old merchant shrank deeper in the shadow of the curtains, the words had "gone home!"

In a few moments the housemaid returned to close the window, and then the old man turned away and walked up and down the great parlors without speaking a word.

He walked with his hands behind him, his head dropped slightly forward, and with a half troubled, half meditative expression on his face.

The words, as I said, had struck deep. They had cut down through all the pride and hardness of years, into some small corner, that shrank and quivered in the heart of the rich man.

After all he was not to be envied, not though he had laid so broad and strong the foundations of his wealth, and built upon it his goodly fortunes; not though on every side he received among men the deference which means and money always attract; not though the dreams of his youth had been fulfilled to their utmost, and the great purpose of his life had been attained; still he, Benjamin Humphreys, was not a man to be envied. He walked up and down the stately rooms, and a new, strange feeling of loneliness and desolation of spirit came over him, and an expression of regret stole slowly over and softened the hard, cold features of the rich man.

He thought how different his home in its solitary grandeur would be if there were sweet faces moving among the great rooms, and bright tones and merry voices breaking the silence, and pleasant laughter, and quick, light feet pattering in and out. And he sat down in a heavy arm chair, by the side of a small marble table, and a sigh made its slow way from the heart to the lips of Benjamin Humphreys.

Then his memory rose up slowly and walked over the long bridge of years to the east land, the land of his youth, and he saw the old brown homestead where his boyhood grew up into youth. The old picture touched his heart—one by one the old days came up, and smiled on him, and in each one, as in a mirror, was a face that smiled too, a small, sweet child's face, with russet curls, which the sun stroked into a golden yellow, and eyes which brimmed over into smiles, smiles which were ready to ripen into laughter, on the dimpled lips red as mountain berries.

The face of his young sister followed the thoughts of the iron-gray haired man. Now it went bobbing and dancing before him through the sprouting corn, now he was guiding it over the stones set in the heart of the little brook under the mountain, and now it was fluttering in and out of the old farm doors, and again it was nestling down on his knee and looking with its shy, loving brown eyes in his face.

"Mattie, pretty little sister Mattie!" murmured the old man softly, and for a moment he forgot how many autumns the winds had combed the faded grass over the face which shown down on him.

And as he sat there, his right hand moved unconsciously amid the rare and costly articles which were scattered on the table. There were delicate vases of Sevres' china, and rare patterns in Bohemian glass, and agate vases, and amid all these there was a plain old-fashioned china cup in singular contrast with its costly surroundings, an old-fashioned white china cup, with a deep gold rim, and a small wreath of leaves in the centre.

And as the old man's hand strayed unconsciously over the table it brushed the china cup, and it fell over on the carpet at his feet.

He bent down and picked it up, and in the midst of the small wreath of flowers, he read the gilt letters there, "Merry Christmas!"

It was Mattie's present to him more than half a century ago! How vividly he recalled it all, the low old-fashioned kitchen, the white flannels of snow that hid the old fences, and lay heavy on the steep roofs of the farm houses, and the great fire in the wide chimney, and the little girl with russet curls and shining eyes that stole up to his side and put her soft lips down to his cheek and whispered "Merry Christmas. It's for *you*, Benny," and the pretty white mug lay in his hand.

It lay in the hand of Benjamin Humphreys now, and he looked at it; he would not have looked if it had been of the gold he loved so well, and his fingers smoothed it lovingly, and the cold gray eyes were dim with something which had not bedimmed them for years, as he said,

"Poor little Mattie—poor little Mattie! It was her merry Christmas!"

And then there came over the old man's heart a strange hunger for the sound of some loving voices, for the clasp of some tender fingers. Yea, they had told the truth, sitting alone in his desolate home, Benjamin Humphreys felt that there was not one heart in the whole world to wish him "Merry Christmas;" and in that hour of solemn, self-revelation, the gold he had heaped and the lands he had gained, seemed to the soul of Benjamin Humphreys what they did to the monarch of Judea, when there welled out from his great soul that awful commentary on all riches and grandeur, and earthly glory—that commentary which all the ages rise up, and repeat, calling down solemnly to one another—"Vanity, all is vanity!"

At last the old man rose up, the solitude oppressed him strangely, he looked about him with a vague longing for some human counsel or companionship, but there was no one in all the world, to whom, on that Christmas morning, Benjamin Humphreys felt that he had any right or claim. But as he went out into his hall, cheerful voices reached him from the kitchen below, and drew him on toward them.

The cook started as her master entered the kitchen, and the chambermaid bustled about in embarrassment, and the broad, sun-burnt face of the milkman, who stood at the back door, with his pail and measure in his hand, grew a little more rubicund than ever, for the rich old man carried with him, as some days do, an atmosphere of chill and gloom. And this morning, by the side of the milkman, stood a small, shrinking figure, and a small, pale, wondering face, with great, shy eyes, in which dwelt some great fear and sorrow.

The little girl's face was hardly a pretty one; it was too pale and thin for that; yet there was a pathetic pathos and charm in it which would have touched a sympathetic nature at once: and as the sunbeams touched into yellow gold the rings of bright brown hair, they reminded the old man of the sweet dead sister of his youth. The milkman made a hasty obeisance to his rich customer, the little child shrank a little closer to his side, and as they turned to go away, Mr. Humphreys said,

"Good morning, my little girl!"

The soft kindly voice, the pleasant smile was one that nobody recognized, and the child stood still, half frightened, half pleased.

"Go and say 'Merry Christmas' to the gentleman," said the rubicund milkman.

The child looked up and searched the old man's face with her great, truthful eyes, a moment: then she came forward and said, in her pretty, timid way, "Merry Christmas, sir!" and the sweet words fell like precious pearls into the heart of Benjamin Humphreys. He thrust his hand into his pocket and drew out a couple of shining dollars, and laid them in the small brown palm of the astonished child.

"What is your name, little girl?" and the cook and the chambermaid and the milkman held their breaths, and looked on, and over all the angels looked on too, and smiled.

"Mattie!" lisped the soft voice of the child.

"Mattie! Mattie!" said the old man, in a voice that was broken, because of all which lay beyond it, and he bent forward and placed his hand in a quick, caressing way, on the small head: "Where did you get that name, my child?"

"It was mother's," answered the little girl, and her lip quivered and struggled before it mastered the word.

"And where is your mother?"

"She is dead, sir:" the answer and the sob came together—a sob that strained the little thin frame, and rocked it as the autumn winds strain and rock the trees by the sea. The hard, stern, rocky heart was cleft at last. The old man could not speak for a moment; he sat down and lifted the little girl on his knee, and stroked her hair with a hand soft as her dead mother's.

And then in a few moments the milkman stepped forward, and briefly explained the whole story: It was all true that the child had said. Two years before her father had died, a month ago her mother had followed him.

They were young people, honest to the core, and neighbors to the milkman, for her father kept a small store in the village, where the farmer resided. After the death of the young man, and the sale of his effects, which just paid the expenses of his long illness, the widow removed with her child to the city, and endeavored to obtain employment at sewing. It was the old story—remuneration was scanty; her health failed her, and finally the young mother closed her eyes on the young child she left friendless and homeless in the world.

And the kind hearted milkman, who, for the sake of the old neighbor feeling, had never lost sight of the widow, had resolved to carry her to his own home.

"His boys were a rude, noisy set," he said, "and he had quite as many mouths as he knew how to feed; but he couldn't leave the child to starve. Perhaps she could help his wife with the chores, and perhaps he should bind her out, but she didn't look like a hand for stout work."

And the old man listened, and the feeling of paternity, which so long had slumbered in his soul, stirred itself once more. He lifted the little girl's face.

"Mattie," he asked, and his voice was like a soft caress on the name, "would you like to stay with me here always, and be my little girl, because—because, I had a little Mattie once, and she has been gone from me a long time, a long time, where your mother has gone?"

He waited greedily for the child's answer, and her great brown eyes went searching from the milkman's face to the old man's which bent over her.

Then a smile broke into the pale lips, she nestled close up to the old man, and put her little hand confidingly in his.

"I will stay with you," she said, "I will be *your* little Mattie."

And so Benjamin Humphreys had some one with whom to keep his merry Christmas after all.

But from that hour he was a changed man, at least to a degree, for, alas! the habits and the sins of a whole life are *not often* wholly revolutionized, but the little orphan girl, whom he had taken into his home, filled with new light, and warmth, and love, the cold and darkened chambers in the heart of the *old man Benjamin Humphreys*.

☞ ARMY BREAD.—An army correspondent thus gives his views of the bread dealt out to the soldiers by the contractors:—"During its 'peninsular campaign' the bread had become inhabited by a very lively species of insect of a brown color and amiable disposition. Various stories are told of these crackers in camp, some of which, I fear, are malicious fabrications. One was that the insects were purposely put in the bread to save mule transportation, and that when the commissary wished to transport the bread he simply whistled and it came itself. Another was that four of these crackers were seen on battalion drill one evening, going through the evolutions with great precision. One of the boys had a lot of bread so thickly settled as to be uneatable, and brought them to the commissary to be exchanged. He was told to lay them down and take others, when he very honestly asked, 'Hadn't I better hitch 'em?'"

THE RIBBON STYLE OF GARDENING.—At Kew, in the British National Gardens, they have had during the past year, various flowers arranged in the ribbon style, that is, in stripes of different colors, fifty feet in length by seven in breadth. The effect of this arrangement was exceedingly brilliant, and has been very happily turned to a practical account, inasmuch as all the great centres to English industry have sent agents and artists to copy it, as designs and patterns for the goods they manufacture. One lady ordered to be manufactured for her fifty yards of stair carpeting, and a drawing-room carpet, the borders and centres of which are to be an exact imitation of the borders and centres of the flower-bed in question.

☞ A Richmond correspondent of the Charleston Mercury, telling anecdotes about the battles last October beyond Richmond, says that during one of them, a straggler, who had built a nice fire and was enjoying it all to himself, observed what he took to be a squad of cavalry. The man in front seemed to be reeling in his saddle. The straggler ran out to meet him, and said, "Look here, old fellow; you are mighty happy. Where do you get your liquor from? Give me some: I'm as *dry* as a powder horn." Imagine his feelings when he found it was Stonewall Jackson—the most ungraceful rider in the army, and who naturally sways from side to side as if he were "three sheets in the wind."

☞ A party of ladies were the other day discussing the question of draft, when a young lady inquired the reason why men were exempt who had lost but two or three teeth? "Because they couldn't use off the end of a cartridge." "Then," replied the questioner demurely, "*why don't they soak 'em in their coffee?*"

☞ "Women," remarked the Contemplative Man, "are deceptive. So is blue water on your bay." "Ay, sir," returned the disappointed Man, "and as full of craft."

NEWS ITEMS.

The convention of newspaper publishers of the State of Connecticut, held a day or two ago, was fully attended, nearly every newspaper in the state being represented. A committee was appointed to memorialize Congress to remove the duty on the importation of foreign paper, and also to reduce the tax imposed upon printers by the excise law. The question of reducing the size of the newspapers of the state was discussed, and the general feeling of the convention seemed to favor the proposition.

Some nights ago Mr. Henry Phelps, of Enfield, Conn., while fast asleep, arose from his bed, procured an axe, and inflicted several blows with it on the head of his wife. Mrs. Phelps finally succeeded in grappling with him. He awoke, and learning the trouble, his dismay was only equalled by his pleasure that she was not killed. Mrs. Phelps is in a fair way to recover.

Projected Attack on Vicksburg.—A letter, dated off Island 100, thirty miles from Vicksburg, December 3d, states that our gunboats will be concentrated at the mouth of the Yazoo river, twelve miles below Island 100, while the army will mass at some point above, and march across the country to Yazoo City, which place is but a few miles back of Vicksburg, so as to make the attack on the latter city simultaneous.

Regular Officers.—As so much is now said about experienced Generals being entrusted with commands, we take this occasion to say that the Army of the Potomac is almost entirely in the hands of regular officers. The Commander-in-chief, Burnside; the commanders of the three wings, Franklin, Sumner and Hooker; the commanders of the six corps, Reynolds, Smith, Couch, Wilcox, Butterfield and Stoneman, and the commanders of nearly all of the divisions, including such men as Doubleday, Sturgis, Meade, French, &c. With an army thus organized, there ought to be good discipline and effective movement; and if there is not, it surely cannot be attributed to the influence of volunteer officers.—*North American.*

Execution.—The New Era, of the 6th instant, gives us details of the execution of private W. W. Lunt, of the Ninth Maine Volunteers, at Port Royal, shot for desertion! The condemned man rode to the spot on his coffin, which was placed in a wagon, and he appeared to be perfectly calm and resigned. He, however, subsequently protested his innocence.

Flag of Truce.—On the 1st instant a flag of truce was sent from Fort Pulaski up the Savannah River. It was stopped a short distance above St. Augustine creek by the chief officer of the iron-clad battery Georgia, which is anchored at the head of Elba island, and is completely surrounded by obstructions which blockade every channel approaching her. She is covered with railroad iron, carries ten guns within eighteen inches of the water line, and resembles the Merrimac in appearance.

The circumstantial account of the landing of the Banks expedition at Winton was entirely erroneous. The expedition was, without doubt, bound for the Gulf, and when heard from it will be from that locality.

Negro Hanged at Holly Springs.—When Col. Lee occupied Holly Springs, Miss., some weeks since, with cavalry, a colored man gave him information which was of much importance, and led, among other things, to the capture of a rebel officer. When Col. Lee retired the negro was left behind, and was immediately hanged by a mob of citizens and rebel soldiers.

Iron-lined Barrels for Kerosene Oil.—A lot of Kerosene oil in iron barrels encased with wood, was stored in a building lately burned in Boston. Some of the oil was saved. The wood was completely burned, leaving the iron-lining and the oil highly heated, but not ignited. The test is important to insurance companies and oil dealers, showing there is but little risk from fire when the oil is properly refined and placed in suitable barrels.

Garibaldi's Hair.—To "X. Y. Z., Isle of Mull," who writes for a lock of the General's hair, I reply that the doctors fearing baldness would produce rheumatism, have forbidden any more to be cut.—*Telegraph's Spezzia Correspondent.*

A Torpedo.—The gunboats Cairo, Marmora and Signal were recently ascending the Yazoo river, and had reached a point one mile below Hague's Bluff, when a torpedo exploded under the Cairo, shattering her bow. She sunk in fifteen minutes, in forty feet of water, and cannot be raised. No lives were lost. The Cairo was one of the first seven iron-clad gunboats built for service on the Western waters, and participated in the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson.

A Great Pedestrian Feat.—A deaf and dumb man recently walked from Edinburgh to London to witness the Great Exhibition; he accomplished the distance, 635 miles, in nine days, in one thirty-six hours walking one hundred and thirty miles. He put grease upon his shoes and whiskey on his feet, and preferred moonlight to daylight, considering the former better by a mile an hour.

At Newport News.—The One Hundred and Seventy-Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment, formed of men from Columbia, Lancaster, Montour and Luzerne counties, and commanded by Colonel James Johnson, of Philadelphia, is encamped at Newport News.

It will be gratifying to the friends of soldiers wounded in the battle of Fredericksburg to know that upon their application they can be sent (as soon as sufficiently recovered) to the military hospitals in their respective states or in those adjoining.

The President is quoted as saying recently to one of the border state Congressmen:—"I have come to the conclusion that slavery is the right arm of the rebellion, and I intend to lop it off."

The Paris *Moniteur*, in a *quasi* official form alludes to the presence of a French squadron at New Orleans, which is represented to have greatly elated the disaffected population. We are listening to you, Mr. Moniteur. And we will remember you.

The Farmers and the Gorilla.—A singular incident occurred on Thursday at the Athenæum. Among the visitors to M. du Chaillu's specimens of gorillas was an apparently well-to-do yeoman, who eyed the stuffed skins, and then the bones, and appeared to be lost in perfect wonderment at their appearance. At length he turned round to the respected Secretary of the institution, and asked in broad Somersetshire,

"Do you believe in 'em?"

"Believe in what?" responded secretarians.

"Why," said the farmer, "in this here Mounseer Challer."

"Oh, yes," replied the worthy official, "I believe in him, for he was here only on Tuesday and gave a lecture."

"What!" quoth the countryman, with a look of indescribable surprise, "here! Why I thought he was stuffed like these here things!"

"Oh, dear, no," Mr. D—— explained, "he is alive, and I believe, hearty."

"Well, I do wonder at that," finally rejoined the farmer; "why, I read a gurt book all wris about 'im twelve months ago, and I thought that they only made up books about men when they be dead."—*Bristol (Eng.) Mercury.*

☞ Man leads woman to the altar; in that act his leadership begins and ends.

CHINESE SUGAR-CANE.

In the three days' session of the late Sorghum Convention, held at Rockford, Illinois, many facts were developed which we regard of exceeding interest to the industrial public. We state them as follows:

1. The fact was certainly established that there is no difficulty in growing the Chinese sugar cane, the Imphee-cane, and the Otaheitan in this latitude.

2. That the successful manufacture of either or all into syrup is a fixed fact.

3. That the granulation of these kinds has been successfully accomplished, specimens of sugar having been exhibited at the Convention proving this.

4. Taking the evidence of Mr. Cory, of Indiana, whom we regard as a pioneer in the business, the Otaheitan will granulate and make handsome sugar beyond a peradventure.

5. That the seed from the Chinese sugar-cane—which has been hitherto regarded as useless except for planting purposes—can be employed, in feeding cattle, hogs, horses, &c., and also can be successfully manufactured into a flour which makes a very toothsome griddle cake. It was offered in evidence, and not controverted, that an acre of cane would produce forty bushels of seed, and that that product was equal in fattening qualities to the same number of bushels of corn.

6. That the juice of the Chinese cane, and doubtless the other qualities, without cooking, can be fed to hogs, cattle, and horses, with admirable fattening results; in fact, that in this respect an acre of cane is equal to two or three of corn. This last is a very important feature, and should challenge the attention of stock raisers.

7. That the stalks, leaves, and heads will make an excellent quality of paper. This fact the Rev. Mr. Smithett, in his excellent address, said, had long been known and practiced upon in the West India Islands and other cane-growing countries.

8. That the *bagasse*, which with our producers has been deemed useless—in fact, a positive annoyance on account of its swift accumulation—can be made to yield excellent manuring qualities, and can also be prepared as a fuel, to the saving of large quantities of wood and coal in the season of syrup boiling.

9. The Convention classified the different qualities of cane, which has never heretofore been done, into three varieties—Chinese sugar-cane, Imphee-cane and Otaheitan.

10. That the quality of syrup manufactured from these three qualities is superior to that of any other offered in the market.

11. That it is superior for refining purposes.

12. That more than 2 000,000 gallons (perhaps 3,000,000) have been manufactured in the state during the past year; and lastly, that it is the most profitable crop than can now employ the farmer's skill and energies.

These facts we consider the Rockford Convention has pretty surely established, and therefore we say in its results it has proved one of the most important Conventions ever held in the north-west.—*Chicago Tribune.*

The Army Appropriation Bill—Vote nearly Unanimous.—In the House of Representatives, on the 18th, the House went into Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union on the Army Appropriation Bill, for the year ending with June, 1864.

Mr Stevens, in response to a question of Mr. Vallandigham, said it contained an aggregate appropriation of seven hundred and thirty-one millions.

Mr. Mallory, after the bill had been read through, offered the following:

That no part of the money appropriated shall be so expended as to encourage the escape of slaves from their masters, or to support and maintain slaves that do escape from their masters, or for any purpose of emancipation or colonization, or for any other object than the establishment of the authority of the Constitution and the Laws of the United States over the rebels.

This amendment was disagreed to—yeas 33, nays 86.

The bill was then reported to the House.

Mr. Wadsworth moved that the further consideration thereof be postponed till the 2nd of January next. Disagreed to—yeas 37, nays 93.

The demand for the previous question was seconded—yeas 90, nays 27.

Mr. Mallory said that if his proviso were added to the bill it would secure an unanimous vote.

The vote was then taken on the passage of the bill and it was passed—yeas 107, nays 3—Namely—Messrs. May, Norton, and Wicklife.

Fidelity of a Dog on the Battle-Field.—On the Monday after the contest, as Hon. John Covode, in company with a number of officers, was passing over the battle-field beyond Fredericksburg, their attention was called to a small dog lying by a corpse. Mr. Covode halted a few minutes to see if life was extinct. Raising the coat from the man's face, he found him dead. The dog, looking wistfully up, ran to the dead man's face and kissed his silent lips. Such devotion in a small dog was so singular that Mr. Covode examined some papers upon the body, and found it to be that of Sergt. W. H. Brown, company C, 91st Pennsylvania.

The dog was shivering with the cold, but refused to leave his master's body, and as the coat was thrown over his face again he seemed very uneasy, and tried to get under it to the man's face. He had, it seems, followed the regiment into battle, and stuck to his master, and when he fell remained with him, refusing to leave him or to eat anything. As the party returned an ambulance was carrying the corpse to a little grove of trees for interment, and the little dog following, the only mourner at that funeral, as the hero's comrades had been called to some other point.

The Popular Vote of the Free States.—The following is given as the summary of the popular vote of the twenty Free States:

States.	Administration.	Opposition.
Maine	6,025	—
New Hampshire	3,584	—
Vermont	25,701	—
Massachusetts	27,268	—
Connecticut	9,148	—
New York	—	10,752
New Jersey	—	14,932
Pennsylvania	—	3,715
Delaware	111	—
Ohio	—	5,501
Indiana	—	9,501
Illinois	—	16,546
Michigan	6,614	—
Wisconsin	—	6,140
Minnesota	4,127	—
Iowa	15,115	—
Missouri	7,054	—
Kansas	4,545	—
California	12,807	—
Oregon	3,589	—
Total	127,438	67,027

Administration majority 60,411.

PHILADELPHIA CATTLE MARKETS.

The supply of Beef Cattle during the past week amounted to about 2516 head. The prices realized were from 6 to 6¾ cents ℔ lb. 120 Cows brought from $18 to 20 ℔ head. 3000 Sheep were sold at 5 cents ℔ lb gross. 675 Hogs sold at $5,50 to 7,00 ℔ cwt.

WEEKLY REVIEW OF THE PHILADELPHIA MARKETS.

FLOUR AND MEAL—The market is firm but very quiet, and the week's sales comprise only some 7000 bbls taken for export, at $5,87½@6,12½ for superfine; $6,25@7 for low grade and good extra; $7@7,50 for Western extra family, chiefly of the latter, and $7,75@8,50 ℔ bbl for fancy Ohio, as to brand, including 3000 bbls part City Mills, on terms kept private. The sales to the trade have been to a moderate extent, within the same range of prices. Rye Flour is selling in a small way at $5,50@5,75, the latter for better brands. Corn Meal is quiet at $3,50 for Pennsylvania Meal; a sale of 500 bbls Brandywine was made at $4,25 ℔ bbl. Buckwheat Meal is scarce and selling at $3,50@3,75 the 100 lbs.

GRAIN comes in slowly, and Wheat has been in fair request both for shipment and milling at previous rates, with sales of 47,000 bushels at 145@148c for Western and Pennsylvania reds in store, the latter for prime; 150c for Southern do, and from 165 to 185c for fair to choice white, the latter for Kentucky. Rye has been taken on arrival at 97@98c for Pennsylvania, and 93@95c for Delaware. Corn is more plenty, and prices are unsettled and lower, only about 25,000 bush yellow having found buyers at 86@90c for old and 75@80c for new. A few small sales of white are reported at 78@88c for new and old. Oats are more inquired for, and 35,000 bush have been disposed of at 41@44c for Pennsylvania and Delaware as to weight, including some lots taken at 62@65c for 32 lbs. Barley is quiet, with sales of 900 bush, part at 140@150c, and part private. Of Barley Malt small sales are reported at 150@153c.

PROVISIONS—There has been more doing in barreled meats, and the market is pretty well cleared of Mess Pork, most of it having been taken at $14@14,12½ for old, and $14,50@14,75 for new ℔ bbl. Beef is steady but quiet at $12@15 ℔ bbl—the latter for city packed. Dressed Hogs sell more freely at $5,50@6 the 100 lbs. Bacon is quiet at 9@10c for Hams, 5@5¼c for Shoulders, and 6@7c for Sides. Green Meats are arriving and selling slowly at 8@8¼c for Hams, and 4¼@4¾c for Shoulders. Lard is firm—bbls and tcs selling at 9¼@10c, the latter for prime western, on short time. Country sells at 8¾@9¼c, and kegs at 10¼@11¢. Butter is selling moderately at 15@20c for packed and roll. Cheese is quiet at 10@11c ℔ lb. Eggs are very scarce, and selling at 26@27c ℔ doz, which is an advance.

COTTON—The stock on sale continues very light, but buyers come forward slowly, and only 300 bales have been taken in small lots at 55@60c for ordinary, the latter for Surats, and 65@68c for middling and good middling quality, cash, including a small lot of fine, sold by auction, at 70c, and some damaged at 40@41c.

ASHES remain unchanged and firm, with limited sales of both Pots and Pearls.

BARK is steady, and about 180 hhds Quercitron, all offered, sold at $36 for first No 1. No change in Tanners's Bark, and the receipts and sales limited.

BEESWAX is scarce, and quoted at 40@42c ℔ lb, the latter for good Yellow.

COAL—The scarcity of vessels operate unfavorably on business; orders, however, come in slowly. There is no alteration in prices, and the sales for home use are moderate.

COFFEE—The market is firm, but very quiet, with little or no stock in first hands; sales comprise only about 500 bags Rio and Laguayra at 30@32c, cash and time.

COPPER is unchanged and dull. Of Yellow Metal prices are steady at 27c for Sheets and 30c for Bolts, on time.

FEATHERS continue scarce and high, and Western are selling at 52@55c ℔ lb, the latter in a small way.

FRUIT—The sales are moderate at $1,50@3 ℔ bbl for Apples and $10@12 for Cranberries. Dried fruit is arriving and selling rather more freely at 4@5c for Apples, and 5@8c for unpared Peaches.

HAY is firm, good Timothy selling freely at 75@85c the 100 lbs.

HEMP—The market is quiet, the stock being nearly all in the hands of the manufacturers.

HOPS are unchanged, with about the usual business to note in Eastern and Western at 20@24c ℔ lb.

IRON—The market is quiet, the firmness of the makers limiting the operations in Pig Metal to some 3000 tons Anthracite, in lots, at $30@32, cash and four months, for the three numbers. For Manufactured Iron the demand continues fair at fully former rates.

LEAD—There is very little stock here out of the hands of the manufacturers, and 1100 pigs Galena sold at $8,25 cash. A sale of Spanish was also made, to come here, at $8 the 100 lbs.

LUMBER is inactive, with a moderate business doing in White and Yellow Pine Boards at $16@17 ℔ M. Lathe are scarce and held for higher prices.

MOLASSES is very dull, and a few small lots only have been taken, including 70 bbls tart New Orleans at 23c cash.

PLASTER—There is very little offering or selling, and we quote soft at $3@3,15 ℔ ton.

RICE is firm, and the sales are limited at 7¾@8c for East India, including 100 bags prime at the latter figure.

SEEDS—Cloverseed is arriving freely, but the demand is less active, and only some 4000 bus found buyers at $6@6,50, mostly at $6,40 ℔ bus. Timothy sells at $2@2,25 ℔ bus, the latter for prime, and Flaxseed at $2,90@3 ℔ bus.

SPIRITS is quiet, and the sales of Brandy and Gin limited at fully former rates. N. E. Rum is selling at 55@57c. Whiskey is firmer, with free sales of bbls at 40@41c, hhds at 40c, and Drudge at 39@40c, closing rather firmer.

SUGAR is quiet. The sales reach only a few small lots Cuba and New Orleans within the range of 9¼@10¾c, cash and 4 mos.

TALLOW—The market is steady at 1¼c for country, and 10¾c ℔ lb for city rendered.

TOBACCO—The market remains very quiet, and the demand, for both leaf and manufactured, limited at quotations.

WOOL—The market is firm, but very inactive; and the sales are limited to a few small lots, taken with the range of 63@68c for medium and fine fleece, net cash. Tub ranges at 72@75c ℔ lb.

MARRIAGES.

☞ Marriage notices must always be accompanied by a responsible name.

On the 11th instant, by the Rev. E. W. Hutter, Mr. John Lond, of Chester, Del. county, to Miss Amanda S. Kilgore, daughter of John Kilgore, Esq. of this city.

On the 14th instant, by the Rev. G. W. Gorman, Lieut. William L. Martine, of the U. S. Navy, to Miss Annie Wisdom, of this city.

On the 8th instant, by the Rev. Mr. Jones, Capt. Thomas D. Horn, of Co. D, 12th regt. Pa. Reserves, to Miss Lydia Curtis, both of this city.

On the 6th ultimo, by the Rev. J. H. Kennard, Mr. John P. Lutz, to Miss Amanda L. Polk, both of this city.

On the 12th of July, by the Rev. Wm. C. Robinson, Mr. William G. Klemm, to Miss Carrie K. Apple, youngest daughter of Jacob Apple, Esq. both of this city.

On the 27th ultimo, by the Rev. M. D. Kurtz, Mr. Isaac S. Bacon, to Miss Henrietta Scarborough, both of this city.

DEATHS.

☞ Notices of Deaths must always be accompanied by a responsible name.

On the 16th instant, at Grotzville, W. D. Brinckle, M. D. of this city.

On the 15th instant, Catharine M. eldest daughter of Mr. John Ilieks.

On the 15th instant, Lydia A. wife of Richard Lawrence, in her 36th year.

On the 16th instant, William Rudolph, in his 41st year.

On the 16th instant, Mr. William S. Miller, in his 37th year.

On the 15th instant, Miss Emma Owens, in her 22d year.

On the 14th instant, Mrs. Sarah Kelly, in her 67th year.

On the 14th instant, Abraham S. Harding, in his 68th year.

On the 13th instant, Robert Walters, in his 69th year.

On the 13th instant, Mrs. Emma Carr, wife of Andrew Carr, aged 48 years.

On the 12th instant, Mrs. Sarah Nice, wife of John Nice, aged 50 years.

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Wit and Humor.

A PRACTICAL JOKER.

George Vandenhoff, the actor, in a pleasant way, contributes to the humorous literature of the age the following dramatic sketch:

There was a low comedian, familiarly called Dick Hoskins, whom I occasionally encountered at several of the small country theatres in the north of England, and who was an inveterate and practical joker on the stage. He was always very well behaved with me, but when he came in contact with a tragedian for whose talents he entertained a contempt, or whose person or manners displeased him, woe to the unhappy subject of his fun. All his tragedy was turned into farce when Dick was in the humorous vein.

Thus he played the grave digger one night at, I think, the Rochedale theatre, in Lancashire, to the Hamlet of a Mr. C——, a most solemn and mysterious gentleman of the cloak-and-dagger school. This gentleman's tragedy was, in Dick's eye, much more intensely comic than his own broadest strokes of farce; accordingly Dick made no terms with it, and showed the unfortunate object of his merriment no quarters on the stage.—When, therefore, Hamlet approached the grave to hold his conversation with Dick in it, the latter began his antics, and extemporized all sorts of absurd interpolations in the text which he spoke in his own broad Lancashire dialect. There was not a good house, and Dick allowed himself full license. Mr. C—— scowled fearfully, but Dick was unabashed. At last he put a climax on his audacity that "topped the infinite of insult."

The theatre was built on the site of an old Dissenting chapel which had formerly stood there, in which a preacher named Banks had held forth, and in the small graveyard attached to which the doctor—for he was popularly dubbed Dr. Banks—had been buried twenty years before, and his name was familiar yet. So, after answering Hamlet's question, "How long will a man lie in the earth ere he rot?" Dick proceeded in due course to illustrate his answer by Yorick's skull; and taking it up, he said, in the words of the text—

"Now, here is a skull that hath lain you in the earth three and twenty years. Whose do you think it was?"

"Nay, I know not," replied Hamlet, in his sepulchral, tragedy tone.

"This skull, sir," said Dick, pursuing the text thus far, and then making a sudden and most unlooked for alteration, "This was Dr. Banks's skull."

And the word skull he pronounced like bull.

Of course the house was in an uproar of laughter and confusion. The victimized tragedian stamped and fumed about the stage as well he might, exclaiming, "Yorick's, sir, Yorick's!"

"No," said Dick, coolly, when the tumult had subsided, taking up another skull and resuming the text, "*this* is Yorick's skull, the King's jester; but"—going off again—"t'other's Dr. Banks's, as I *told* you!"

This was too much; this was the last straw on the tragedian's back! He jumped into the grave, seized the (very) low comedian by the throat, and a most fearful contest, never before—or since, I hope, introduced into the play ensued, in which Dick held his own bravely, and succeeded at length in overpowering, in a double sense, the worsted tragedian, whom he held down in the grave with one hand, while he flourished "Dr. Banks's skull" in triumph above his head.

The curtain was dropped amidst roars and shrieks of laughter, in which the king, queen, monk and courtiers—who, in the vain hope of arresting the row, had been sent off with Ophelia's empty coffin—were compelled to join, forming a tableau which finished the play for that night.

SCENE IN A MAIL-COACH.

"Will you open that window, sir?"

"Certainly not, sir; I have a bad cold."

Such was the request addressed to his *vis-a-vis* in the royal mail by a small gentleman in a suit of black, and in a profuse perspiration; and such was the answer returned thereto by a person addressed—a highly nervous individual—rejoicing apparently in about fifteen stone, certainly in a blue coat with gilt buttons, a seal-skin cap, a red face, and nose to correspond.

"Will you open the window, sir?" again demanded, after a few minutes, our friend of the sable garments, in a tone half angry, half speculative.

"Really, sir," was the reply, "I am sorry, sir, but must decline to do so."

"Do you intend to open that window?" a third time exclaimed the pertinacious votary of freedom, in accents wherein scorn and wrath were blended, with a quivering lip and pallid cheek.

The lusty man shrunk back in his place. An assault with violence seemed impending. But though a large, he was a brave man, and he said—

"No."

And again there was a pause—a decidedly unpleasant and embarrassing silence. The little querist turned pale, and gave a deep sigh. At last, in a voice of thunder, he roared out—

"Will you, sir, or will you not, open that window?" and at the same moment his hand, with nervous rapidity, sought his coat-pocket. The red-faced man trembled, he turned pale, and cast a supplicating glance at the other two inmates of the carriage, as if to say, "Pray help me; I may be murdered; I really think the wretched imp must have a stiletto or loaded pistol in his pocket." The glance may have been satisfactory, for the great gentleman, followed by short pause, mildly said—

"Rather in a draught, sir."

"Will you, sir, or will you not, sir?"

Nevertheless, a large silk pocket-handkerchief hands suddenly jerked from its place of concealment, the diminutive tormentor of his bosom flew, and a

"You

With a face of ashy hue, he held out the Indian kerchief with one hand, the other reclined gracefully on the region of his heart. Anger had passed away from his brow; slowly and deliberately he cast an unearthly look on his trembling victim, and said—

"Then—sir—you—must—take the consequences—(here he gave symptoms of spasmodic affection)—for—I—am—going to be—sick!"

THE CORPORAL.

There is a very amusing scene in the vaudeville of the "Prisoner of Rochelle," which has been setting thousands laughing at one of the Paris theatres. One of the French papers gives the equivocal duet between *Corporal Cartouch*, who has a musket in his hands, and is going through the manual exercise, and *Lesa*, who is seated at her work-table, and abstractedly trying to load him towards the subject of matrimony:—

Lesa—"If a girl was to fall in love with you, Corporal, what would you do?"

Corporal—(Manœuvring with his musket)—"Present arms!"

L.—"She would doubtless look to you for—"

C.—"Support!"

L.—"And then what a heavy burden you'd have to—"

C.—"Carry!"

L.—"Your butcher and baker would have to—"

C.—"Charge!"

L.—"Your prospects, of course, would not—"

C.—"Advance!"

L.—"And you'd have to—"

C.—"'Bout face!"

L.—"And never have any—"

C.—"Rest!"

L.—"Now, Corporal, pray give me your—"

C.—"Attention!"

L.—"A man of your years is not able to bear such a—"

C.—"Load!"

L.—"But you are not in your—"

C.—"Prime!"

L.—"Your wife may—"

C.—"'Bout!"

L.—"Leave you, but she will soon—"

C.—"Return!"

L.—"And then you'd have to bear all on your—"

C.—"Shoulder!"

L.—"You would be—"

C.—"Ready!"

L.—"I think you have some other—"

C.—"Aim!"

L.—"And you'd throw all your epistles into the—"

C.—"Fire!" [*Fires the musket.*]

MY MOTHER'S DYING CALL.

BY RENA RAY.

The birds sang sweetly, so sweetly and joyously that it seemed as if the silvery-throated warblers were vying with each other. The morning breeze came fresh and cool from the hills, sweeping lightly over the clover fields and fanning my cheek with its perfumed wing. But I did not listen to the birds' songs; I heeded not the serene beauty of the morning, for I was so intensely engaged in reading—not the Bible, but a new novel, which I had commenced the preceding evening—that all sights and sounds were unlike unheeded.

"Jessie," said a sweet voice, faint and low always, but now fainter and lower than usual; but I did not answer immediately, or spring to my mother's bedside, as I usually did, at her first call, but waited a moment to glance down the page. "Jessie! Jessie! come here, my child."

"Yes, dear mother, in a moment," I replied, without withdrawing my eyes from the book.

"Come now—now, my love."

"Yes, mother, in a moment, as soon as I have finished this page," and I continued reading. The page was finished. "Mother," I said. There was no reply. "Mother." Still no answer. I listened and heard a faint breathing. "Ah, she has fallen asleep," thought I; "it is early and I will not disturb her. A little more sleep will do her good."

Then I commenced another chapter. It was very exciting, very, and so I read on, so wholly absorbed that I thought not of my mother.

"Why, Miss Jessie, I knocked and knocked, but not hearing any sound, I thought you must be asleep yet," said a voice beside me at length.

"Well, what's wanting, Ann?" I inquired a little impatiently, without raising my eyes.

"Why, I rang the bell twice for breakfast and you did not come, so I thought I must just come in and see if anything was the matter. And seeing it was time for your mother's breakfast, I have brought her some toast and tea along, and I should just like to know how mistress is this morning?"

"She is very comfortable, Ann," I replied hastily; "she has been awake, but she has fallen asleep again. She has had a nice nap this morning."

"Well, it's glad I am to hear it, for she has looked miserable these few days past."

"Miserable! you are mistaken, Ann; she has looked better than usual. I think she improves every day."

At this Ann shook her head ominously, and went out. I was preparing to resume my reading, but Ann's words had made me nervous, and my mother's toast and tea were getting cold. So I laid down my book and went softly into the other room. I approached the bed. My mother looked so calm and peaceful I could not bear to disturb her. But it was past her usual breakfast hour, and I called, "Mother! mother!" but she did not stir. I stooped and kissed her white brow—it chilled my lips. I grasped her hands—they were icy cold. I raised her in my arms. I shook her. I shrieked in her ears, "Mother! mother! Oh, my mother!" But the warm breath came not to the dear lips; the pulse was still; the heart was still. My mother was dead—dead! She had died alone—died while I, her undutiful child, unmindful of her earnest, dying call, was engaged in the adjoining room reading a novel! Yes, a novel deprived me of my mother's last kiss—of my mother's dying blessing! Oh, the anguish of that hour!

Years have passed by, but a deep, abiding sorrow is with me. My mother's dying call is ever sounding in my ears, piercing my heart with untold anguish.

Reader, have you ever through disobedience or neglect slighted a mother's call? If you have, do so no more. Ever listen to her voice, and hasten cheerfully to obey her slightest wish as well as her serious mandates. Do this, and when the grave closes over her and shuts her forever from your sight you will have nothing with which to reproach yourselves. Tears of sorrow bedewing her memory will not be mingled with those of remorse.

THE NEW THING IN HAIR.

LADY SWELL.—"Oh, yes, you know! Quite new! The old nets and beavers' tails getting awfully common, you know!"

IF!

Ah, dearest, if our tears were shed
Only for our beloved—dead;
Although our Life's left incomplete,
Tears would not be so bitter, sweet,
As now!—ah, no.

Ah, dearest, if the friends who die
Alone were those who make us sigh;
Although Life's current is so fleet,
Sighs would not be so weary, sweet,
As now!—ah, no.

If oft more pain it did not give
To know that our beloved live,
Than learn their hearts have ceased to beat,
Grief would not be so hopeless, sweet,
As now!—ah, no.

THOMAS HOOD.

ANCIENT FORMS OF MARRIAGE SERVICES.—In a very ancient marriage service, which is clearly of Anglo-Saxon origin, the bride's contract is as follows:—"I take thee, John, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer and poorer, in sickness and health, to be bonny and buxom, in bed and at board, till death do us part, and thereto I plight thee my troth." At a later period the words, "If holy church do so ordain" were added. According to the form in use in Northumbria, the bridegroom's promise was as follows:—I take thee, Alice, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, at bed and at board, for fairer for fouler, for better for worse, in sickness and health, till death do us part." Other formulæ differ but little from these. In all of them the bride promises to be "buxom and bonny, at bed and at board;" "but further than these words extend, does not promise either to honor or to obey.—*Thrupp's Anglo-Saxon Home.*

Agricultural.

THE WASTE OF MANURES IN CITIES.

I have been reading in the "Miserables," Victor Hugo's very lively and instructive chapters on the sewers of Paris. He quotes Liebig to show that "ancient Rome's cloaca absorbed all the well-being of the Roman peasant;" that when the Campagna of Rome was ruined by the Roman sewer, Rome exhausted all Italy, and when she had put Italy in her cloaca, she poured in Sicily, then Sardinia, then Africa. With epigrammatic wit Hugo says, "this example Paris follows with all the stupidity peculiar to cities of genius." With her 140 miles of sewers, Paris precipitates into the Seine and the sea, hundreds of millions in those simple elements which she has gathered from the soil far and near, never to be returned to it. Thus he says, "the cleverness of man is such, that he prefers to throw one hundred millions of the best guano in the world into the gutter!" But he continues, "when draining everywhere, with its double function, restoring what it takes away, shall have replaced the sewer, that simple impoverishing washing, then, being combined with data of a new social economy, the product of the earth will be increased ten fold, and the problem of misery will be wonderfully diminished. In the meantime, Europe is running herself by leakage and exhaustion." Thus far, the Chinese is the only nation that has from necessity been compelled to return to the earth all the elements of the food consumed, in order that it may produce sufficient nutriment to subsist its immense population. Edinburg is, I believe, the only European city that has commenced distributing its sewerage to the surrounding country, as manure for both grain and grass; and it is said that the experiment is a great success. How soon will the day come when what has long been a necessity in China, and now in Europe, the appropriation of sewerage as manure, will also be a necessity to the United States? The city of New York alone, now daily destroys the corn and cattle of a large district of country, every simple element of which goes into the sewer, to be "in the deep bosom of the ocean buried," never to be again quickened into vegetable and animal life!

Often has this deponent gone from fetid manure streets of New York, sickened with the confined air and compound smells of a tainted atmosphere, to the gravelly soils of Staten Island, or the sandy plains of Long Island, when, in the fresh and stimulating sea atmosphere, the arid soil alone cried aloud, for those elements of fertility which were the plague spot and bane of the great Babylon. I then could but reflect, that Providence had designed from the beginning, that those hungry siliceous plains should be the recipients of the wastings of the great city; the easy, grateful soil, being already perfectly prepared and underdrained by nature's hand, to need nothing but that which in the city was a crying daily waste, a source of squallor and disease.

New York has her poor houses, her charitable institutions, without stint. But methinks the crowning charitable institution is not that which displays the finest architecture, or that which the most comfortably feeds and lodges its eleemosynary inmates; but that which usually employs them, while it feeds them. I want to see on the underdrained, bushy plains of Long Island, a vast market, fruit, and flower garden, or gardens, manured by the city wastings, sewerage, if you please, and worked by the cities' poor: Such a consummation would relieve pauperism of its bane,—idleness, its demoralizing chronic helplessness—by a discipline and practical daily training, that leads to self-reliance and subsequent self-respect, and consequent usefulness in the world.—S. W., *in Genesee Farmer.*

PROPER SHOEING OF HORSES.

FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

When will owners of horses learn better than to pay a smith for crippling, and we may say spoiling, the most noble of the brute creation, which forty-nine out of fifty will do by shoeing. The proper form of an old horse's foot should, and might be the same, or nearly the same, as that of the foal at four months old; but the smith will cut away the heel because it cuts easier than the toe of the foot, and then cut down the bars because he has got the heel so low they are in his way, when any person at all acquainted with the business should know that the toe grows faster than the heel, and consequently needs the most paring. Also that with the bars constantly cut away, the strongest foot will contract, and for that reason be disposed to corns, navicular disease, &c. The heel should be pared but very little, and one naturally weak scarcely at all. W. W. B.

SALT, SULPHUR, AND BACON FOR SHEEP.—A sheep-keeper in Indiana says he promotes the health of his flock by a free use of salt, and an occasional use of sulphur mixed with the salt or with feed, and two or three times a year he gives the sheep some old bacon, which is cut up and mixed with the salt. Another sheep-keeper thinks tar better than the fat bacon, though it is more work to administer it, for each sheep has to be caught and its mouth opened and the tar put in with a paddle. Another one thinks resin, in powder, mixed with salt, or meal, or grain, fed to sheep, just as good as tar, and a great saving of labor.

PLANNING FLOWER GARDENS.

One of the worst ways of planting a flower garden is to set out indiscriminately, plants of all colors, of different heights and habits of growth, without regard to any system or design. It is enough to make an orderly man's head ache. Here is a verbena, next a poppy; beyond is a petunia, and hard by is a lilac-bush; next is portulacca, and next a morning-glory, and so on. Such a confused mass of things is at best childish. Let there be some kind of system—almost any is better than none. This is a good one: Let the plants on a particular bed be similar in form, or color, size or style of growth. If different colors appear in the same bed, let them be of such kinds as will harmonize well together.

It is a growing custom, and a good one, to have the beds small, and only one color to a bed. Then, when the garden is viewed from the windows or veranda of the dwelling, it has the appearance of embroidery or carpeting. Mr. Loudon recommends drawing out in winter, on paper, the plan of the garden, and coloring the beds with paint, so as to see what the effect will be. Make the arrangement of colors a long and careful study. When the plan is fixed upon, it will be the simple work of the gardener to find the plants which will give the required colors during the entire summer, and at the least expense. We suggest this hint to the florists of the Agriculturist family, for winter study.

A NOVEL MODE OF GROWING ASPARAGUS.—A neighbor of ours has tried the following method for several years, and finds it successful: Laying off his beds four and a half feet wide, and sixteen feet long, he spreads on the surface a coat of sand two inches thick, and spades it under. (His soil is a stiff clay.) Then he lays upon this six solid inches by careful measure, of half-rotted dung. After this has settled a week he spreads over it four inches of good garden soil; and in this he sets out one year old plants, twelve inches apart from crown to crown. The roots soon find their way into the rich provender below, in which they luxuriate, as the large, succulent shoots soon show.

Useful Receipts.

CIDER WINE.—The Country Gentleman gives the following from a correspondent: Take pure cider, made from sound ripe apples, as it runs from the press, put 60 lbs. common brown sugar into 15 gallons of cider, let it dissolve, and fill clean sweet casks with the mixture within two gallons of being full; put them in a cool place, leaving the bungs out for 48 hours; then bung up, leaving a small vent until fermentation wholly ceases; then they are to be bunged up tight, and the wine will be fit for use in one year. It improves with age, and may be left upon the lees.

PRESERVING WOOD BY SALT.—J. B. Simons, of Brush Valley, Indiana, thus writes to the Scientific American:—I have used common salt for the preservation of mill-shafts or water-wheel shafts, and it has had a good effect in staying the decayed timber. Take a two-inch auger, bore holes into the stick of timber, and fill up with salt, and then plug up the holes tight. In a large stick of timber, like a water-wheel shaft, bore a hole through the centre, like a pump, and fill up with salt and plug up, and there is no telling how long this may last, as it has been tried with us, and has answered very well. No man would believe what effect it will have till he tries it. I have used it in a mill shaft that was decaying, and it certainly has helped it wonderfully. I have never seen a salt barrel but what was sound, and will stand more wet weather than any other barrel or stave of its kind.

GLUE FOR READY USE.—To any quantity of glue use common whiskey, instead of water. Put both together in a bottle, cork it tight, and set it away for three or four days, when it will be fit for use without the application of heat. Glue thus prepared will keep for years, and is at all times fit for use, except in very cold weather, when it should be set in warm water before using. To obviate the difficulty of the stopper getting tight by the glue drying in the mouth of the vessel, use a tin vessel with the cover fitting tight on the outside, to prevent the escape of the spirit by evaporation. A strong solution of isinglass, made in the same manner, is an excellent cement for leather.

LADY HUNTINGTON'S PUDDING.—Take one quart of milk—from this reserve enough to wet four heaped table-spoons of flour—mix the flour very smoothly with this milk, boil the remainder of the milk, and add four well-beaten eggs, a little salt, and the flour. Boil a few minutes, stirring it with energy. Wet your pudding dish, and put the pudding in it, sift over it a half a cup of white sugar. Put half a cup of wine and half a cup of sugar together, and pour over the pudding as it is sent to the table. Eat cold, and if properly made, you will confess it to be one of the most delicious puddings in the whole world of cookery.

☞ "Oh! what shall I do if Theodore is drafted?" said a young girl to her grandmother, while thinking that perhaps her lover might be obliged to shoulder his musket and go to the war. "Do!" said the old lady, her venerable eyes sparkling with the light of other days, "do as I did for Nathan the last time the red coats came over here. Make coarse shirts and pantaloons for him."

☞ "Humming-bird" robes are the newest thing out, and are of salmon silk, ornamented by sprays of foliage, birds and butterflies being represented thereon. It takes a Capot to get one.

☞ "I'm particularly uneasy on this point," as the fly said when the boy stuck him on the end of a needle.

The Riddler.

MISCELLANEOUS ENIGMA.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

I am composed of 59 letters.

My 50, 1, 47, 21, 11, was a Latin poet.
My 6, 31, 24, 24, 52, 45, 48, 34, is a precious stone.
My 1, 14, 49, is a vapor.
My 19, 25, 26, 44, 54, 3, is a city in Europe noted for its beautiful scenery, also for its watches.
My 7, 18, 39, 47, 22, 59, 25, is the wild flower.
My 26, 43, 9, 37, 10, 36, was a renowned philosopher.
My 13, 1, 30, 40, 28, is an erring point of the compass.
My 4, 17, 20, 42, 15, 55, 6, 4, 10, 9, is one of America's sweetest poets.
My 8, 30, 50, 4, 48, 18, is a city in Ireland.
My 12, 45, 43, 47, 1, 18, 32, is a precious stone.
My 47, 45, 4, 5, 58, 30, is a grain, a native of the East, mentioned in the Bible.
My 57, 4, 5, 35, 9, 10, 23, 46, 50, is a name that will never be forgotten.
My 30, 37, 50, 31, 11, 37, is a great desert.
My 43, 29, 54, 25, 59, is a number.
My 33, 31, 16, 21, is a fruit.
My whole is a verse from one [illegible]'s poems.

"IRENE" E. C.

Wampsville, N. Y.

CHARADE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

Entire, a term to children applied;
Behead me, an animal small;
Again, I am a preposition;
Again, and I'm used by all. LETA.

CHARADE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

Entire, I have lately been a cause of much excitement; behead me and I am a kind of float; behead again and transpose, and I am not lean; now behead me, and I am a preposition.

LETA.

ANAGRAMS ON GIRL'S NAMES.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

A nym. Tentane.
In a givri. C in a role.
Glge, an oar. A sell.
Ilu jet. I am Anna R.

G. M. TUCKER.

GEOMETRICAL PROBLEM.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

There is a spherical polygon whose angles are respectfully 110, 120, 150, 140 and 150. The radius of the sphere is 11 inches. Required the area of the polygon? JOS. S. ROSS, Jr.

Cincinnati.

☞ An answer is requested.

PROBLEM.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

A, B, C formed a stock company of $30,750. A's money was in 5; B's 4, and C's 3 years. A's stock and profit was $15,300; B's stock and profit $14,850, and C's profit alone was $4,500. Required each man's stock? E. HAGERTY.

Baltimore.

☞ An answer is requested.

ARITHMETICAL PUZZLE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

There is a certain number consisting of two digits, the order of which may be reversed by adding to the number three-fourths of itself. What is the number? G. M. TUCKER.

☞ An answer is requested.

CONUNDRUMS.

☞ What female recluse is that whose name read backward and forward is the same? Ans.—Nun.

☞ What lady-like designation is that which is spelled backward and forward the same? Ans.—Madam.

☞ What time is that which spelled backward and forward is the same? Ans.—Noon.

☞ What portion of a young lady's dress is that which spelled backward and forward is the same? Ans.—Bib.

CONUNDRUM.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

☞ What commandment is broken by four letters? Ans.—The 10th, I N V U. (I envy you.)

UTOPIA.

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES IN OUR LAST.

MISCELLANEOUS ENIGMA—The battle of Antietam, September seventeenth, eighteen hundred and sixty-two. GEOGRAPHICAL ENIGMA—"When I said my foot slipped, Thy mercy, oh Lord, held me up." ENIGMA—Maj.-Gen. A. E. Burnside. CHARADE—Broom, room, moon. RIDDLE—Part. (Art, rat, at, T.)

Answer to Daniel Diefenbach's MENSURATION QUESTION, published Nov. 22. Inside measurement, 5.96 inches, nearly; outside measurement, 6.85 inches.

ARTEMAS MARTIN.

Franklin, Venango Co., Pa.

Daniel Diefenbach's answer to the above is 8 inches.—*Ed. Riddler.*

Answer to my MATHEMATICAL PROBLEM, published Nov. 29. There will be formed 10000 triangles. ARTEMAS MARTIN.

Franklin, Venango Co., Pa.

Answer to Daniel Diefenbach's GEOMETRICAL PROBLEM, published Nov. 29. 96 acres.

ARTEMAS MARTIN.

Franklin, Venango Co., Pa.

Answered also by E. Hagerty, Baltimore, and Francis W. Hibbard, Ohio.

Answer to TRIGONOMETRICAL QUESTION, by Augustus, published Dec. 6. The sides of the triangle are 360, 348 and 434.4007 perches, respectively; and its area is 282 acres and 120 perches. ARTEMAS MARTIN.

Franklin, Venango Co., Pa.

Answered also by T. M. Laughlin, New York, and E. Hagerty, Baltimore.

Answer to Old Book's ARITHMETICAL QUESTION, published Dec. 6. They will meet 61 3-5 miles from E, and 68 2-5 miles from F.

Answered by Utopia, Albany, E. Hagerty, T. M. Laughlin, New York, and Artemas Martin.

☞ It is understood that a society is about being formed, the main feature of which is to adopt measures to procure a substitute for cotton shirts. The young gentlemen engaged in this have under consideration the adoption of single-breasted vests, to be buttoned up to the neck.